



Window on Jordan

Why kids close their books and hit the streets

Ibtisam Awadat

Special to The Star
RUNNING AWAY from school is today a common sight in Jordan. Some educators say that now is the time to take concerted action against pupils skipping school lest the problem gets out of hand. Others, however, argue this is an alarmist view and that truancy is a worldwide phenomena, and not specific to Jordan. However, the reasons for skipping from schools are manifold.

"I wanted to stay at school, but my father refused to give me money to buy anything. That's why I ran away—to earn money," said Khalid while he was wandering downtown with his 12-year-old

brother Amer.

"I hate school, all you get is homework and beatings from teachers. Anyway, I don't understand any of the subjects, especially maths," Amer maintained. Khalid and Amer are alone neither in their attitudes nor on the street. They are accompanied in both by an increasing group of boys.

A young woman eyed the boys curiously while she was getting her own child off to school. "I really feel sorry for children who don't have the chance to continue in school," Suha told *The Star*. She said that she was forced to drop out of school at the age of 14.

"My family forced me to leave school, so after

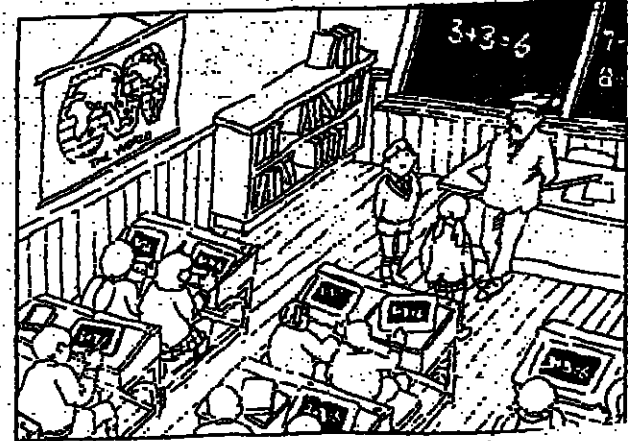
two years I married my cousin. Now I have two girls and a boy."

Suha is still angry with her family because they prevented her from achieving any of her dreams.

"I'm determined not to allow anyone to interfere in my life again. My sons, especially the girls, are going to get everything they need to help them graduate with the highest degrees," Suha added.

There are two aspects to truancy. "First is the simple fact that some children just do not attend school at the required age, though these are relatively few in number," said Abd Al Raheem Subeimat, director

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The Star

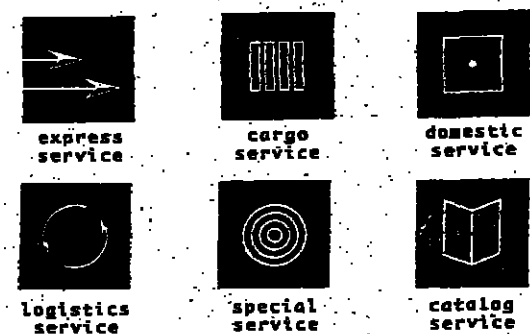
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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

King says efforts continue to uncover truth behind Shmeisani murders

AMMAN (Star)—His Majesty King Hussein has said that efforts are underway to uncover the truth behind the recent triple murder in Shmeisani of three Jordanians. Prominent Jordanian lawyer Hanna Nadeh, his son Suhail and psychiatrist Awni George were shot dead at George's clinic during the Eid holiday. The King was responding to reporters' questions after attending a cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

The King pointed out that such crimes were alien to Jordan. He hinted that the culprits could have come from outside the country. "Jordan is open for everyone who comes from various places in the region... and since the Gulf crisis in the early 1990s the social web has changed... This, perhaps, is a part of the problem that we face... But I am confident that we will pinpoint the problem... and will know exactly what happened in order to deal with the matter appropriately," the King said.

Responding to a question about the link between the internal security situation in the Kingdom and the stumbling peace process, His Majesty said, "I do not see a link between both issues... Regarding the home situation, what happened is very sorrowful... We are shocked for what took place... and we hope that we will reach the realities as soon as possible."

Sharif's murder puts PNA, Hamas on collision course

Star Staff Writer and combined news agencies
PALESTINIANS CLEARLY remain concerned about the circumstances surrounding Hamas "Engineer II" Mohiedin Sharif's death and are uncertain where to lay the blame, and what will ensue in the aftermath of the event. There are several conflicting versions of the story, and repercussions from both the killing and the exchange of accusations in its wake continue.

The PNA charges Hamas with the killing, but Hamas suggests that agents of Preventive Security Service Chief Jibril Rjoub killed the bomb maker, either because of a personal vendetta or on behalf of Israel.

The strong man of West Bank security was accused last year of surrendering a Hamas military cell in the West Bank to the Israelis. It is said that the late Sharif had promised to revenge Rjoub's action.

With little hard information to go on, many Palestinians suspect that Israel is somehow

behind both the killing and the tensions between the PNA and Hamas. And they fear a violent clash within their own community that, they say, would ultimately serve Israel's interests.

Yet questions over the death of the Hamas bomb maker are provoking trouble in an already tense West Bank, and are threatening to drive a permanent wedge between the two main political players in the West Bank and Gaza. Fear is mounting that there might even be a civil war.

Tensions broke into the open last week over the killing.

Some Palestinian officials and members of Hamas blame Israel for what looked like an assassination. But the Netanyahu government quickly and repeatedly denied any involvement in sharp contrast to the 1996 death of another leading Palestinian bombmaker, Yahya Ayyash, when Israel refrained from comment. It is widely believed the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security services, was behind the killing.

Shortly after Israel's denial of their role in the affair, the



Sharif

plot began to thicken. Rjoub travelled to the office of PNA President Yasser Arafat in Ramallah at midnight to inform him that Mohiedin was killed in a power struggle, following a long conflict within Hamas, and that his cohorts tried to cover up the killing with the explosion.

Rajoub based his report on a supposed confession made by 19 year old Hamas member Ghassan Addasi. He later managed to smuggle out a letter denying the confession in which he stated that he was forced under torture to claim involvement in the killing of Sharif.

Hamas, anxious to cast a degree of doubt on the official explanation, said the PNA was at least indirectly responsible for the killing, in collaboration with Israel. A Hamas spokesman in Gaza, Abdulaziz Rantisi, called the PNA investigation "lies." The Authority, sensitive to any criticism or challenge to its powers, reacted quickly by detaining him.

Rantisi, in an address to an Islamic rally earlier this week, said that Sharif had died under interrogation, after which he was shot by Palestinian security officials in an attempt to cover up his torture. He disclosed that Hamas activist Addasi was arrested minutes after the explosion occurred.

Arafat's government then pulled in key Hamas political

leaders and dozens of mid-level activists, as well as the man they claim shot Sharif, Imad Awadallah, whose brother, Abdel, is head of Ezz Eddin Al Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas.

Palestinian police also arrested Ibrahim Makadmeh, another senior Hamas leader long on Israel's most-wanted list who had not said anything publicly about Sharif's death. Makadmeh, still a strong advocate of armed struggle against Israel, is thought to be highly respected by Hamas' militant base. Makadmeh is believed to have the authority to give the green light for Ezz Eddin Al Qassam Brigades for revenge attacks against Israel.

Israel remained on high alert against a terrorist attack Sunday despite the PNA roundup of Hamas suspects from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The alert was issued during the Passover holiday because security officials believe that the Hamas military wing still has the capacity to send suicide bombers into Israel, even though its top bomb maker is dead.

According to analysts, the recent arrests give Hamas new incentive to attack Israel, since such strikes inevitably provoke an Israeli backlash against Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

When Hamas wants to score against the PNA, they use Israeli retaliatory power to their own political advantage by hitting Israel. A spokesman added that by attacking Israel, Hamas kills two birds with one stone.

For their part, Hamas political leaders called for an independent investigation into the Sharif affair. They also demanded that members of the PNA investigating team be put on trial. Meanwhile the Hamas military wing threatened to take revenge both in Israel and against Israeli targets around the world.

There are a number of opinions concerning Arafat's decision to rein in Hamas, which has opposed the Israeli-Palestinian peace process from its inception in 1993. First of

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Sharif affair has driven a wedge into Palestinian ranks.

Privatization:

A blessing or a curse?

By Iham Sadeq

Star Staff Writer

PRIVATIZATION OF at least some of Jordan's public sectors continues to be the source of considerable controversy. The merits of the issue are being debated in Parliament and weighed in the press. A number of economists believe that the policy would lead to drastic economic changes, that wouldn't necessarily be beneficial, either to individual Jordanians, or to the society as a whole. Even the man in the street seems cautious to applaud it.

Some fear that privatization would mean price hikes on consumer goods because of the further lifting of government subsidies. This could result in price fluctuations, instability, and sharp hikes, producing a situation in which the consumer may become a slave to the "moods" of the merchant.

They cite price increases in bread, and the lifting of subsidies on sugar, wheat and powdered milk followed by the increases in water, fuel oil and electricity one after the other in rapid succession as examples



On-site discussion of privatization.

of what might continue, should privatization prevail.

Some experts even warn that privatization would increase the number of jobs.

Pro-privatization experts stress the opposite. If public companies are privatized, they say, more jobs would be created, and the quality of production would improve.

Also they agree with the government that introducing strategic partners from overseas would help greatly because of

the necessary investment capital and the advanced technology that they would bring into the country.

Economic analyst Ahmad Al Nammari sees it differently. He opposes privatization because he fears that the monopoly will simply be transferred from the public to the private sector.

Al Nammari says that a clear line should be drawn between those who are against

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Rattle of guns gives way to sounds of progress

By John Daniszewski

BEIRUT—Until a few months ago, crossing between East and West Beirut near the waterfront at night meant threading through a labyrinth of empty streets and past ghostly buildings, the abandoned silhouettes of destruction that served as reminders of civil war.

That quintessential Beirut experience is no more.

Now traffic flows along recently built overpasses and through newly opened tunnels. And from the bridge at Fouad Chehab Avenue, one looks down on a

shining cube of light—the new, 18-story regional headquarters of the United Nations, the first building to be opened in Beirut's central district since the 1975-90 conflict.

Journalist Tewfik Mishlawi said it gives him a boost whenever he sees the lights from the UN building burning brightly, a harbinger of renewed life after so many years of darkness in the old heart of the city. The new highways

are welcome too, helping to knit together the war-sundered sectarian communities of Beirut.

"This will have a very big psychological effect," he said. "This has removed the barrier between Muslim West Beirut and Christian East Beirut."

Beirut has always been an emblematic city. For years, it was known as the crossroads of the Middle East, a paradise where East met West, where the jet set played, where spies spied and bank accounts were kept even more secret than in Switzerland.

Then, during the civil war, it was the heart of darkness, a city whose name meant kidnapping, killing and chaos. More than 85,000 people are thought to have died in Beirut alone, among them the 241 US Marines

Continued on page 3

Report hints of renewed tension over inspections of Iraqi sites

By John M. Goshko

UNITED NATIONS—A report by UN experts says the first inspection of formerly off-limits Iraqi presidential buildings revealed no sign of prohibited weapons systems but warns that attempts at further inspections could encounter Iraqi resistance. UN sources said Tuesday night.

An annex to the report, also described by the sources, cites statements by Iraqi officials that they do not regard the United Nations' right to search the buildings as open-ended and hints that Iraq might now take the position that it has discharged its obligations toward UN inspections. If so, that could lead to a renewal of the recent tensions that led to a crisis in which Washington threat-

ened to bomb suspect sites in Iraq.

These are the main points of the report detailing the findings of inspections that were carried out at eight presidential sites in various parts of Iraq between March 26 and 3 April, the sources said.

The inspections followed a four-month confrontation over President Saddam Hussein's refusal to give the United Nations access to the palaces and subsequent US threats of air and missile strikes against Iraq.

The crisis was defused, at least temporarily, when Secretary General Kofi Annan went to Baghdad and negotiated with Saddam Hussein an agreement for UN inspectors to search the palaces and other sites accor-

panied by diplomats under the direction of Janyatha Dhanopala, undersecretary general for disarmament affairs. Dhanopala's secret report was sent to Amman Tuesday. The sources said they tentatively expect it to be forwarded to the Security Council on Wednesday.

Richard Butler, head of the UN's Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, already has said that the searches by teams of UNSCOM inspectors and diplomats turned up no evidence of secret Iraqi nuclear, chemical or biological weapons programs. That point is spelled out in greater detail in the report, the sources said.

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Why kids close their books and hit the streets

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of academic education in the Ministry of Education.

The second aspect is far more problematic. More and more students are running away from school. "They constitute 1.2 percent of the total number of students in Jordan—that figures out to about 9,000," Suheimat elaborated.

While the number of truants remains relatively consistent, the causes of the problem vary from case to case and run the gamut from social and family situations and economic problems all the way to the educational system itself.

"A pupil may skip school for any number of reasons. There are often serious personal problems: a death or divorce in the family which affects the student's health and spirits and may eventually lead to truancy. Suheimat pointed out that a family's economic circumstance is a principle factor that leads children to drop out of school and enter the more immediately lucrative labor market.

Could the educational system be to blame? "When we talk about the system,

we have the teacher, the school and the book," Suheimat noted. He sees this as crucial to the level of school attendance. "The teacher's classroom behavior is especially important. If students are punished either physically or psychologically, or their real needs are disregarded, problems will arise.

Slow-learning students and diligent students both need attentive and sensitive instruction," Suheimat explained that the Ministry has inaugurated special schools for gifted students, as well as more facilities for weaker pupils with special needs.

"Students sometimes drop out because they can't understand the material. Because of this, the Ministry has set up a special department that reviews and revises textbooks to insure that the material is appropriate to the various grade levels," Suheimat stressed.

And the Ministry, Suleiman emphasized, is making a real attempt to curb truancy. "If a student is absent from school without permission for one week, the headmaster notifies the parents." If they don't cooperate, the headmaster informs the

Ministry of Education which in turn goes to the Administrative Governor.

"The Administrative Governor often manages to return many of these cases to school, but there are still those who don't cooperate," he said.

As the pupil matures, perhaps realizes he left school too early and now wishes to return, there are educational opportunities provided by the Ministry that can work to his advantage. "We have a parallel education and evening study courses in public schools enabling students to make up for knowledge and skills lost because of earlier absences," Suleiman said.

The Ministry of Education is preparing a promising project to provide 15-year-olds with educational essentials which they may have missed due to truancy.

"We call the project 'Weekend Camp.' It will be established in some educational institutions for those who have missed a lot of school, to provide them with the opportunity to catch up on their education in their free time," Suleiman said, noting that the project is supported by the Chinese Government. ■



Their other job: Running away from school is not a youngsters' prank as it commonly supposed

Prince Hassan returns

AMMAN (Petra)—Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath returned home on Tuesday following a working tour which included Britain, Germany and the United States which was followed by a private visit to Europe.

Prince Hassan inaugurated the Jordanian Badi Week in London. He met in Bonn with the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and discussed with him the latest developments in the region as well as means of developing economic relations between both countries.

In New York, Prince Hassan met with Arab and Islamic envoys to the UN and discussed with them the efforts exerted to overcome the obstacles hindering the peace process.

Gorbachev in Jordan Sunday

AMMAN (Petra)—Former Soviet President Mikhail Sergievich Gorbachev is due to deliver a lecture entitled "The Leadership and the International Challenges" in Amman on Monday. Gorbachev, who is expected to arrive in Amman on Sunday, is invited by the International Leadership Academy, whose Consultative Council is presided by Her Majesty Queen Noor.

Ensour welcomes Blair's visit

AMMAN (Petra)—Deputy Prime Minister for Services Affairs, Minister of Information Abdallah Ensour welcomed on Monday the coming visit of British Prime Minister Tony Blair to Jordan. He said during the weekly press meeting on Monday, that Jordan welcomes the visit particularly as it comes following the recent visit of British Foreign Minister Robin Cook to the area. "We look with great importance to this visit and its timing, at a time when the stumbling peace process is pushing the region towards unpredictable dangers," Ensour said. "Blair's visit aims at moving the peace process to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region," he added.

Shbeilat released

AMMAN (Star)—Leith Shbeilat has been released from detention following the ruling of the Court of Cassation. Shbeilat has been released on bail awaiting the outcome of his court case. The General Assembly of the Court of Cassation ruled in favor of releasing Shbeilat after a formal application was made on his behalf by his lawyer, Hussein Mjalli. Shbeilat was taken in custody for his alleged role in the Ma'an riots last February.



King Hussein chairs Cabinet session

AMMAN (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday presided over the cabinet session where he was briefed on the plans and future programs of each ministry.

The King expressed great relief, pride and appreciation for efforts exerted by the government in all fields. He affirmed that the supreme national interest should be in the forefront of priorities. The King expressed also his absolute confidence in the government and its ability to confront the challenges of the stage and of realizing more progress and accomplishments.

"Supreme security interest should be built and realized beyond apologetic means, to shorten time and distance towards achieving the targets which we all seek," the King said.

He affirmed the necessity of going ahead without hesitation in the administrative development and elevating the efficiency of state apparatus and productivity, as well as intensifying rehabilitation programs in both public and private sectors to be able to compete.

The King touched on the importance of creativity in the administrative field to transcend poor financial resources. On the issue of poverty and

means of tackling it, the King was informed that funds for the first stage of the social productivity program from 1998-2000 at a cost of JD 178 million have been secured.

His Majesty affirmed the importance of activating the investment sector in all fields, particularly in the fields of industry, agriculture, tourism and trade, pointing out the significance of setting the legislations and measures to promote investment and create jobs.

Regarding the agricultural sector, His Majesty stressed the necessity of setting a mechanism to tackle the issues of agricultural loans. He called for these loans to be directed to the productive fields. He also touched on the importance of tackling the problems of agricultural marketing and other problems.

In the field of youth and sport, the King urged the private sector to contribute to the preparations for the coming Arab Sport Round which is due to take place in Jordan in 1999.

Following the session the King said, "I believe that we should focus on the just and comprehensive peace that gives people their rights and enables them from living in security in a different atmosphere than that in which we

lived for a long time of our lives."

"I think that matters are moving in the right direction despite the existence of obstacles... I believe that the great accomplishment regarding the old and new Irish cause is something that stimulates optimism that focus would be concentrated on the pivotal problem regarding the Palestinian Israeli dimension, and the rights of the Palestinian brethren on their national soil," His Majesty said.

The King called also for solving all other issues including the withdrawal from the occupied Syrian and Lebanese lands to achieve the comprehensive peace which would afford a dignified life for the peoples of the region.

Regarding Jordan's stand concerning an Arab summit and if this issue has been discussed by His Majesty and Egyptian President Mubarak in Sharm El Sheikh, His Majesty stressed that Jordan is always for Arab meetings, and supports such meetings. The King pointed out to the importance of preparing for a successful summit that would result in an Arab stand and position that would serve the Arab cause everywhere. ■

Privitization A blessing or a curse?

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privatization out of hand and those opposed who also realize the importance of private investments to either expand already existing projects or establish new enterprises. He notes there is an enormous difference between the two.

The point of dispute is the fact that the government is gradually abandoning its shares in profitable companies and seems willing to sell them to strategic foreign partners. It is currently seeking to sell 40 percent of its equity in the Jordan Telecommunication Company and 30 percent of its stake in the Cement Factories Company.

Lower House deputy Nazih Ammarin, also an opponent, wonders whether privatization has been embarked upon to serve national needs or simply to meet the instructions of the International Monetary Fund.

He stresses that the concept of privatization hasn't yet been made completely clear, adding that there are certain strategic sectors of industry, such as oil, phosphate and fertilizers, which

should not be touched.

Ammarin says it is dangerous to allow foreign businesses to own shares approaching 100 percent in local companies. He argues that the incoming investor would likely be much more interested in looking out for his own profits while ignoring more local prerogatives.

But he concedes that if privatization is an "inevitable evil"—as he terms it—then we implement it carefully. Al Mammari on the other hand doesn't necessarily reject foreign participation but stresses that priority be given to national capital.

There are a number of points that must be taken into consideration when the ownership of any company is transferred to the private sector. These include:

- Proper assessment of company assets, so it is sold at fair market value.
- Sale of shares on the Amman Financial Market.
- Investment of revenues generated from the process into new productive enter-



prises, while encouraging the private sector to take an active role.

■ Protection of workers' rights when public companies are privatized.

Prominent economic expert Dr Youssef Mansour views the issue from another angle. He wondered what would happen if the privatization process stopped. What would be the result?

He points out that it would mean that the government would have to borrow more

than \$500 million to finance operations for modernization, rehabilitation and expansion of its institutions to guarantee greater efficiency and profitability.

And that's not all. Mansour argues that the government would also be committed to borrow more than \$500 million to construct the proposed electric power station, in addition to an extra \$650 million to finance the water network projects.

All in all this would mean an economic decline, as the Kingdom's debts would rise by approximately \$1.6 billion.

Mansour adds that if the process of privatization is abandoned or hindered, foreign investments will shy away and Jordan would lose a considerable number of investment opportunities.

Egypt, for example, Mansour notes, has succeeded in attracting foreign investments estimated at \$740 billion. This is simply the result of embarking on bold and successful measures to privatize its public corporations. ■

Arabs say last rites for peace process

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Israel has withdrawn its troops from most of the Palestinian town of Hebron. But further withdrawals appear unlikely before mid-June.

Egypt has become increasingly anxious at the failure of the US to break the deadlock by putting pressure on the Israeli government to abide by the Oslo agreement.

"It's up to the Americans to save the peace process. If (US envoy Dennis) Ross comes again and achieves nothing, he won't come a second time," Mousa said, referring to a week-long attempt by the US envoy earlier this month to restart negotiations. "What is needed is a major policy action by the US. What is their position?" he asked.

Ross left the region empty-handed after a series of meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

The Egyptian government does not believe the US can be replaced as the main sponsor and mediator in the peace process. But it is equally determined to maintain the land-for-peace principle agreed in Oslo, even if the US fails despite its regional influence to see the agreement carried out.

"We don't believe in vacuums even if the US is unable to lead the peace process," Mousa said. "Anything the Netanyahu government did would continue to be illegal," he said. "There will be a reassessment. Business as usual cannot continue."

Mousa revealed that Netanyahu telephoned President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt last week in a fruitless effort to convince the Egyptian leader that Israel remained ready to honour its commitments. Mr Mubarak has made it clear he no longer trusts Netanyahu.



Israeli soldier looks on in the old city of Jerusalem

Evidence elsewhere of this distrust lay in the recent Lebanese and Syrian rejection of Israeli offers to withdraw its troops from south Lebanon. The proposal to withdraw, demanded by a 20-year-old UN Security Council resolution, was rejected because of Israeli conditions. ■

Financial Times Syndication

Report hints of renewed tension over inspections of Iraqi sites

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However, the sources added, the report notes that UNSCOM expected that result since Iraq had several weeks during the stand-off with the United Nations to remove any incriminating material or documents from the palaces and their subsidiary buildings.

Butler and other officials had said their main aim in the first round of inspections was twofold to establish the principle that UNSCOM has the right under its mandate from the Security Council to search the presidential sites, and to get a baseline idea of the size and nature of these buildings to aid future inspections. In that respect, the report says, the initial inspections were regarded as successful.

More ominous, the sources said, is an annex to the report written by Charles Duelfer, the deputy head of UNSCOM, which describes hints of a possible future return to obstructive tactics by the Iraqis.

Although UNSCOM officials have said the Iraqis generally were cooperative during the searches, the annex, as described by the sources, cites several instances when Iraqi officials objected strongly to the inspectors taking photographs inside the palaces and surveying them with overhead helicopter flights. The report says the Iraqis relented in their objections only after the

inspectors made clear they would not budge on these points.

In addition, the sources said, the Iraqis indicated at various times to the inspectors that they understand the agreement with the United Nations to be of limited duration. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz has said that his government was permitting the now completed round of inspections to prove its contention that Iraq no longer has any prohibited weapons and should be freed of the burden of UN economic sanctions.

However, UNSCOM says that it has considerable more work to do before it is able to piece together the whole story of Iraqi weapons programs.

Accordingly, UNSCOM contends that the agreement between Saddam Hussein and Annan gives the United Nations the power to keep conducting inspections for as long as it believes necessary. Annan also has said that is his interpretation of the agreement. ■

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Sharif's murder puts PNA, Hamas on collision course

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all, they say, Arafat does not tolerate open challenges to his authority and to the credibility of his government.

Arafat undoubtedly realizes that any Hamas attack on Israel now not only would kill the chances for a further Israeli redeployment from the West Bank—currently under negotiation—but would bury the whole peace process, which, it seems, Arafat cannot survive without.

Beyond that, he may be afraid that backing for Hamas attacks is growing in the absence of progress on the peace track, which has been deadlocked since early 1997, when Israel aggressively began building settlement on Jabal Abu Ghinain on the outskirts of traditionally Arab East Jerusalem.

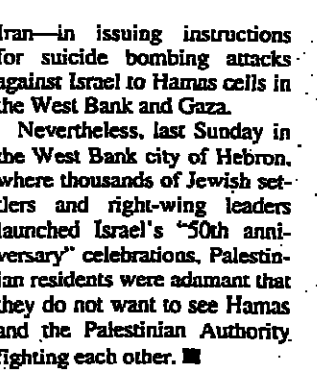
However, observers say that the PNA is not cracking down on Hamas to the degree it did in 1996, after a wave of suicide bombings killed dozens of Israelis in revenge for the assassination of Hamas bomb

maker Yehiya Ayash, probably by Israeli agents.

At that time, Arafat shut down schools, health clinics and mosques run by Hamas, and arrested hundreds of activists in social and political wings of the Islamic movement.

Observers believe that the PNA is not willing to escalate the situation in the Palestinian areas but instead prefers to bring stability to the situation, especially since the PNA believes that cracking down on Hamas will lead to an inter-Palestinian civil war. In light of this threat, the Authority appears to be mostly arresting and interrogating Hamas leaders about Sharif's death.

But there is a dispute within Hamas itself as its political and military wings argue over the role of military operations against Israel as a tool to destroy the peace process. The debate rose in late 1995, when its political movement in Gaza challenged the role of "outsiders"—particularly the military activists that are based in neighboring countries and



Rjoub

Iran—in issuing instructions for suicide bombing attacks against Israel to Hamas cells in the West Bank and Gaza.

Nevertheless, last Sunday in the West Bank city of Hebron, where thousands of Jewish settlers and right-wing leaders launched Israel's "50th anniversary" celebrations, Palestinian residents were adamant that they do not want to see Hamas and the Palestinian Authority fighting each other. ■

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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
by Marwan Al Asmar

King receives German Media Prize

His Majesty King Hussein has been awarded the German Media Prize which is presented annually by the Media Control and Media Research Institute. The Prize is being presented to the King by the German Federal President Roman Herzog at a ceremony in Baden-Baden on 24 April. King Hussein is receiving the prize for his lifelong efforts in support of peace. Last year the prize went to Russia's president Boris Yeltsin.

Tourism galore in Aqaba

More people are heading for Aqaba than ever before. Up to 50,000 people visited Aqaba during the Eid festivities. It was tourism galore for all commercial establishments and restaurants in the blazing-sun seaside resort. No more complaints about economic recession, and a flagging trade—on the contrary, quite a number of people had to set up camp on Aqaba beaches, because all the hotels were booked.

No to visit

Upper House Senator Leila Sharaf said that she will never visit the West Bank and Jerusalem as long as they continue to be occupied by Israel. Speaking to Radio Monte Carlo, the former Minister of Information said that she fears not only for Jordan, but for the future of the whole Arab nation. The widow of the late Prime Minister Abdel Hamid, Sharaf added that those who thought that peace would bring about stability have become disenchanted and that it has become clear it is peace that is creating instability and new dangers.



Sharaf

Extra day for the workers

Civil service employees might just receive another one-day holiday per week. While it is not yet official, the government does seem to be moving in that direction. If it proves correct the public employees will no longer have to work on Thursdays. This is still under discussion, but the Ministry of Administrative Development is currently looking into ways of implementing the proposal. What is certain is that everybody—most government employees, that is—now want the extra day off. A study conducted by the Ministry found that 95 per cent of those interviewed want another day off during the week, and prefer Thursdays to any other day. The new arrangements would mean that ministry employees would clock out at three o'clock in the afternoon rather than the current two. However Minister of Administrative Development Dr Bassam Al Umouh is not pleased. He emphasizes that giving employees another day off would lessen their overall productivity.



Al Umouh

Accidents

As usual, the Eid festivities produced their fair share of accidents. Eight people died and 103 were injured throughout the country. In addition, there were 25 fires.

Busy, busy, busy

The 14 committees of the Lower House of Parliament have their hands full. They are looking into at least 44 draft laws. The Legal Committee, for instance, is looking into Temporary Law No 1 (1983) of the Press Association, the draft law of 1993 to ban liquor, the Civil Courts draft law of 1996, a draft law to set up a freedom, democracy and a human rights center and a 1997 reform draft law for the State Security Court.

The maggot

A very interesting piece of information came our way the other day: Worms. According to Hemayet Al Mustahlek, the magazine of the National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP), the Standard and Metrology Corp (SMC) has allowed the existence of worms in frozen fish. Bushed on all of you out there before you leap for the telephone, there is more than meets the eye. Although such a decision was condemned by the NSCP, it pointed out that the SMC has categorically stated that only one worm is permitted per fish. The curious thing is that this ratio applies only to worms in the flesh of the fish. There are apparently no standards concerning the number of worms inside of each fish. This is something to ponder!

Jordanian Parachuting Club

Prince Abdallah goes for the jump

By Ibrahim Awadat and
Miguel Arami
Special to The Star

HIS ROYAL Highness Prince Abdallah is the perfect example of a military man. His professionalism as a leader is equaled only by his love of actively competing on the playing field.

Despite a busy schedule, his desire to improve his competitive skills and to broaden the range of his experience on the athletic field never flags. His never-ending responsibility to the Kingdom doesn't prevent him from taking an active role on the Jordanian sports scene.

He tells The Star that his interest in games started when he was still in school, and intensified as he grew older. The range of the Prince's sports interests have broadened over the years. He is currently Chairman of the Jordan Football Federation. He has also been the primary promoter of parachuting in the Kingdom, and to this end, in the 1980s, initiated the idea of establishing the Jordanian Parachuting Club (JPC) which has become increasingly active in recent years.

Prince Abdallah foresees a promising future for parachuting in Jordan.

He says there are already a number of Jordanians with the necessary skills to participate safely in the sport, and adds that "all we need is financial support, because the infrastructure for parachuting needs more development." The Prince continues that "financial sources" are necessary to cover "various expenses, especially buying parachutes."

However he stresses that "the level of Jordanian expertise is very high."

Prince Abdallah praised Samih Jankat—vice-president of the JPC—and his coach, who urged him to begin parachute jumping.

He looks forward to the time when national teams will



Prince Abdallah and Prince Ali with parachuting team

be formed. "So that we can organize other competitions like the one entitled POPS which took place last year in Aqaba."

Parachute jumping is now an established sport in Jordan. Many members of the Royal Family have taken an active interest in the sport. First to take the jump was HRH Crown Prince Hassan, followed by TRH Princes Faisal, Hashem, Hamza, Rashid and Ali the president of the JPC.

Prince Abdallah also began jumping very early. His first jump was in 1982.

"On my graduation and in the presence of His Majesty King Hussein, I jumped, but I opened my parachute late—my coach Mr Jankat opened his even later. So, His Majesty had to watch two bodies falling from the sky. He was so concerned for me that he might have wanted to prevent me from jumping again, but thank God, we made it."



King bestows medal on his daughter Princess Aysa in 1984. She was the first woman parachutist in Jordan

Today, the Club has a promising future and is in a good position to hold further competitions. Interest in parachuting in the Kingdom is rapidly increasing.

"Some organizations have expressed their wish to practice parachuting in Jordan because of the appropriate weather conditions. In addition Jordanian hospitality also encouraged many people to come back."

Women in Jordan are also becoming more interested in parachute jumping.

"Princess Aisha Bent Al Hussein was the first female parachutist in Jordan: she

jumped in 1984. Now the number of women is rapidly increasing."

He adds that women "with a very positive influence on parachuting."

Prince Abdallah is elated by the sport. From a military point of view he says that "parachuting is an important skill which every military man should add to his file."

On a more personal note, however, the Prince notes that "parachuting teaches you to face your fears and to deal patiently with any dangerous situation you find yourself in."



Prince Abdallah talks parachuting to Star reporter



On one of the training courses

Press Column

Edited Raed Al Abed

Hamas and PNA on the precipice

The current dispute between the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas is sounding the alarm bell: relations between the two sides may be taking a turn for the worse.

Writing in *Ad Dastour* daily, columnist Nawaf Al Zaroe says that the situation is critical, could lead to further confrontation and result in bloodshed. This would in turn severely weaken the very basis of Palestinian nationalism.

The Palestinians are currently in dire need of aligning different factions in order to establish a solid body that is capable of achieving national objectives and safeguarding Palestinian rights and interests.

There is no other way to face and thwart the occupier's plan to dominate the land and suppress its people, Al Zaroe says.

If the disagreement between the two factions is not contained immediately, the writer warns, then it will serve Israeli interests and double Palestinian anxiety during a stage crucial for achieving independent status. The expert adds that the Palestinians should the conflict go unresolved, wouldn't be able to maintain the united stance required at this time to push toward establishing an independent state on their soil. He fears that such a situation would be welcomed by Palestinian foes who would look at it as an opportunity for furthering their own goals.

The real intention of the Israelis revolves around forcing the two sides—the PNA and Hamas—into a destructive civil war that will only weaken them and make them more easily manipulated.

The writer continues that the national interests of Palestinians depend on the existence of both the PNA and Hamas, for all the difficulties in their relations, they do, in fact, complement each other.

So, is the mounting tension going to serve Palestinian interests? Or is it Israel which will reap the fruits of any internal confrontation inside the Palestinian body politic?

Mahmoud Rimawi of *Al Rai* addresses the same issue. He agrees with Zaroe, and says that the main beneficiary of this sordid affair will be the Israelis.

Internal Palestinian strife would only reduce the pressure on Israel to abide by its previous commitments to the peace process and, moreover, would allow Israel to continue its policy to confiscate land and build more settlements.

What is so ironic is that the assassination of Muheidin Al Sharif—instead of being used as a means to unify Palestinian ranks—was transformed into an opportunity to spread doubts, exchange accusations and escalate tension between PNA and Hamas.

The writer concludes by calling on the two sides in the conflict to give priority to fight their sole and common enemy: Israel. Such a situation, Rimawi says, arouses condemnation and distress rather than mutual respect. The two sides must turn over a new chapter.

Good spirit and good blood go hand in hand

Jordan is one of the leading developers of transfusion services in the region. The primary goal of the National Blood Banks is to provide safe and adequate blood and blood products to patients in need.

There are 30 blood banks in the Kingdom—20 of them are run by the Ministry of Health and the remaining 10 by the Royal Medical Services, University Hospital, the Red Crescent and the Islamic Hospital.

In 1997, 104,614 units of blood were collected in the country. Of the total number of donors, 27 percent were volunteers, while 73 percent were family replacement donors. Approximately 2 percent of the Jordanian population are blood donors; statistics indicate a likely increase to 3 percent.

All blood units are tested for transfusion transmissible diseases including HIV 1 & 2, HBsAg, HCV, syphilis and malaria.

The patronage of Her

Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan helps National Blood Banks. The Princess's primary goal of the National Blood Banks is to provide safe and adequate blood and blood products to patients in need.

Orbit Festival—held in Amman last February in cooperation with the Muslim Youth Women's Association—is one of many activities organized to help raise funds to support humanitarian and health organizations, including the National Blood Bank program.

The funds raised from these activities will go to purchase equipment for The National Blood Bank, West Amman Branch, and Zarqa Regional Blood Bank to improve blood transfusion services in the country.

National Blood Bank takes this opportunity to thank Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan for her continuous support. ■

Rattle of guns gives way to sounds of progress

Continued from page 1

echoed the thud of mortars and the rat-tat-tat of machine guns, today there are the ever-present roar of compressors and the grinding gears of construction machinery, merged in an almost joyful din. Where once stood buildings that looked like Swiss cheese, perforated by thousands upon thousands of rounds of ammunition, there are now smooth facades, and—painstakingly restored Art Deco flourishes.

The US decision last summer to end the longtime ban on Americans traveling to Lebanon was a message to the world that Beirut was back open for business. Now the progress in construction and restoration has become undeniable. The herculean work of Solidere, the private consortium in charge of rebuilding and marketing the ruined district, is starting to pay off.

"The city will have a bit of Hong Kong, a bit of Paris, a small part of everything," promises Lebanon's peripatetic prime minister, Rafik Hariri, a billionaire builder

who has been the driving force behind the regeneration of the capital.

"When you live in Beirut," he said in an interview, "you feel that you can have anything."

Despite Hariri's ebullience, many Lebanese still eye the future with apprehension. The city has been rebuilding as if peace in the region was an accomplished fact, but these Lebanese fear that any untoward move by Syria or Israel, or a breakdown in authority inside Lebanon itself, could easily plunge the country into another devastating round of conflict.

Even Israel's recent acceptance in principle of a 20-year-old UN resolution to withdraw from the part of southern Lebanon that it occupies gives little comfort, because it was accompanied by warnings from Israel that it would re-invade if it felt its security threatened.

Undeterred by such doubts, Solidere has plunged ahead with its work at a breakneck pace. For four years, it has

been clearing rubble, reclaiming new land from the sea, removing refuse and installing sewers, electricity and phone lines.

By summer's end, the streets in the central business district will be resurfaced to the public, complete with newly planted trees, street furniture and, ornamental lamps, said Nasser Chammas, Solidere's chairman. He said he expects fellow Beirut residents to be surprised at all that has been accomplished since work began.

"Some people seemed to think that we are just dreaming, that this is some kind of mirage," Chammas said. "I say they're in for a big shock."

Solidere officials say work on basic infrastructure is nearing completion, as is the refurbishment of about 265 war-damaged structures that were deemed worthy of saving for their cultural, historic or architectural significance.

Now all decks are cleared for new construction, including the rebuilding, in traditional style, of Beirut's famed

open-air marketplaces—its souks—by the end of next year.

Soon there will be commerce again on the Rue des Banques and other landmark avenues.

To Chammas, all this building is more than a matter of bricks and mortar. It is a chance to bring the city back together after Muslims and Christians retreated to their corners during the civil war.

But the rebuilding of Beirut is not confined to the center. Just to the west, the clock on College Hall at the American University of Beirut, destroyed by a car bomb in 1991 in a last spasm of violence after the war's end, has finally been rebuilt. Students at the American-chartered college that for more than a century educated the elite of the Middle East again hear the familiar hourly chime as they move between classes.

Meanwhile, runways are being extended at Beirut International Airport in accommodation a hoped-for surge in tourists and business travelers.

Along the seaside corniche and in the shopping district of Hamra in West Beirut, new luxury hotels, boutiques and restaurants are opening nearly every week, residents say. Parts of Christian East Beirut already look like Paris.

"It's coming. But I wouldn't say it's back," said Walid Dawu, manager of the Hard Rock Cafe, situated on the four-mile corniche that snakes along the turquoise-blue Mediterranean and is now the haunt of joggers, skaters and bicyclists. "We have a lot of people investing."

Yet skeptics abound, those who believe that Lebanon remains hostage to the whims of its stronger neighbors. Such people are still "voicing their fear" and moving abroad, observed one longtime diplomat in the city.

Among the skeptics is Edmond Hajjar, a 25-year-old electrical contractor. He is happy about his income, which has risen along with the construction boom. A friend whistles with envy when Hajjar, sipping juice in

one of the city's three Internet cafes, admits to making \$2,000 a month.

Yet even Hajjar is not sure whether to stay in Beirut or emigrate to the United States, where he has a girlfriend.

"We are still living in a tense situation," he said. "You don't know which day you are going to have a war. We really don't trust that we won't endure a war again."

The war has caused Lebanon "to lag behind the rest of the world, and this too makes you think of leaving."

Still, many here cherish a hope that Beirut can recover some of the allure that made it so appealing before the tragedy of the civil war.

"Will it be like it was? Well, no country is like it was 20 years ago, not even the United States," said Iyad Khatib, a 23-year-old pursuing a master's degree in computer engineering at American University. "Maybe it can be better."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Our Say...

PNA-Hamas crisis

THE MYSTERIOUS killing of a leading Hamas activist, Mohiedin Al Sharif, in Ramallah last month has widened the rift between the Palestine National Authority (PNA), which has vindicated the Israelis from any involvement in the murder, and the militant Islamist organization.

Both sides have traded accusations, especially since the PNA announced that Al Sharif was gunned down by his own comrades during an internal power struggle. Hamas leadership has ridiculed such statements and accused the PNA of working to dismantle its infrastructure in order to appease the Israelis and the Americans.

The PNA's investigation of the killing has been questionable at best, while earlier conclusions and accusations were marred by contradictions and counter claims. It is now difficult to ascertain the value of any conclusions that PNA police and internal security bodies might reach over the killing. This, in addition to recent arrests of Hamas leaders, has damaged the PNA's credibility internally and abroad.

It is now obvious that the current crisis between Yasser Arafat's PNA and his main political rivals in Gaza and the West Bank will not be brushed aside easily. Away from the death of Al Sharif, the current tension comes at a time when the peace process is gasping for life, creating much despair and frustration among the Palestinians.

The PNA's human rights record—particularly its repeated assaults on the press and freedom of expression—indicates a state of delusion and lack of self confidence in the Palestinian leadership. The last thing that the Palestinian cause needs now is a confrontation between Palestinian factions that will only weaken the national front and strengthen the Israelis.

Some time ago, Hamas and Mr Arafat came to a working arrangement that allowed both sides to express opposing views on the Middle East peace process while bringing to a halt attacks against Israel in order to give the political process a chance. As far as we know Hamas has stuck to its side of the bargain. But since the prospects of the political process continued to deteriorate at the hands of Benjamin Netanyahu, the PNA appeared to be losing the public relations battle inside the territories.

The Palestinian public grew more hostile to Israel, the United States and to the Oslo process which had failed to deliver on its declared objectives.

The current crisis is serving Israel's interests. Only weeks ago, Netanyahu was becoming restless and isolated as Israel was singled out as the side unwilling to respect and fulfill its commitments under the peace process. Even the Clinton administration was growing impatient with Netanyahu's cat and mouse game which was reducing Washington's credibility in the region as an honest broker and a sponsor of the peace process.

The PNA-Hamas crisis has offered Netanyahu a chance to turn things around once more. As he walks away from the present crisis, the Palestinians find themselves once more engrossed in an internecine struggle which could cost them dearly.



Belfast residents stroll past 'the writing on the wall'—which they hope will change their lot in the near future. See page 7 for related story.

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Bibi sidesteps statehood issue

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—After a rocky first year as prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, 48, is now trying to steer a careful course between right-wing coalition partners who oppose any further concessions to the Palestinians and a restless Clinton administration eager to push the peace process forward. Washington Post columnist Lally Weymouth spoke with Netanyahu last week.

I've heard that you and US Middle East envoy Dennis Ross have discussed a new proposal: Allowing the Palestinians to build in certain Israeli-held areas near the Jordan Valley.

We're discussing a number of possibilities to bridge the gaps, but we haven't made any final determination. I think Ross saw a serious effort on the part of the Israeli government. There are two principles we believe are essential for peace. One is that the Palestinians fulfill the promises they gave us to fight terrorism and annul their covenant, and the second is that the US recognize the need for Israel to determine its security needs and hence the area from which it will withdraw.

What is your vision of peace with the Palestinians and what's your strategy to get there?

My vision is that at the end of the final settlement, the Palestinians will be able to have their own territory and the ability to govern themselves inside that territory but (with) none of the powers that could threaten Israel.

In other words, they won't be able to have a defense capability?

They would be able to have local law and order capabilities, but they shouldn't be able to field a large army or to import weapons that could effectively neutralize Israel's defenses.

So, there will be no Palestinian state?

My opposition to the word "statehood" is because it tends to encompass those unlimited powers that could threaten Israel. I have no problem with the Palestinians running their own lives. Therefore, I envision a final settlement which is a balance of the Palestinians' need to run their own affairs and our need to protect Israel's security. I believe that this government can strike a balance and deliver an agreement which the overwhelming majority of Israelis can stand by.

Your right-wing supporters oppose a deal that would hand over more land to the Palestinians.

I made it very clear that if (Palestinian leader Yasser) Arafat and the Palestinian Authority keep their side of the bargain, we'll keep our side.

In other words, no matter what conditions your right-wing supporters lay down, you can deliver?

Yes. The primary issue for me is not the coalition. It's a coalition of one, myself. If I'm convinced that the Palestinians will

do in concrete terms what they are expected to do—to arrest terrorists, to collect weapons, to hand over killers, to annul the charter and such—then no coalition will prevent me from delivering on our side of the bargain.

Your relationship with the Clinton administration does not appear to be successful. Please comment.

It's had its difficult moments. Over the years we've had divided views between American presidents and Israeli prime ministers on Israel's security needs. We had (Dwight) Eisenhower and (David) Ben-Gurion differing on the Sinai; (Gerald) Ford differing with (Yitzhak) Rabin during the reassessment in 1975; (Ronald) Reagan and (Menachem) Begin clashing over Lebanon.

Do you and President Clinton have a fundamental difference?

In comparison to those disagreements, this is a milder case.

Is it true that the Palestinians only arrest terrorists when Israel presents them with intelligence?

They only act on a specific tip that we give them. For example, if we say that terrorist X, living on street Y in city Z, is about to launch a terrorist act against Israel, they'll pick him up. But they don't do systematic sweeps (and) interrogations. They're not making the difficult choice, which Egypt and Jordan have made. The choice is whom do you want to make peace with—Israel or the terrorists? It's one or the other, but not both.

Do you want to move to final status talks?

Sure. Both Arafat and myself expend an enormous amount of political capital on interim steps which in the public mind lead nowhere.

People wonder if you intend to make peace, or if you are just stalling?

I think the American people have a very healthy appreciation of Israel's desire for peace and of my desire for peace.

But do you have a vision of living in peace one day with the Palestinians?

Yes, I do...not one day, (but) soon. If Arafat accepts my offer to negotiate a permanent settlement, we could have a historic breakthrough with the one government that can deliver. I hope it happens during this term.

What happens if Arafat unilaterally declares a Palestinian state on May 4, 1999, the original deadline for a perma-



Netanyahu

nent status agreement?

I wouldn't recommend unilateral action. Palestinian unilateral actions always run the risk of unilateral Israeli actions... Israel cannot be thrown back to the indefensible '67 boundaries and Jerusalem will never be redivided.

Do you have any hope of a treaty with Syria?

Yes, I do. If Syria is less rigid about the conditions for restarting the negotiations, I believe we could make progress. In any case we have decided that after 20 years of our stay in Lebanon, our objective is to withdraw once we have the necessary security arrangements.

Turning to Israel's celebration of its 50th anniversary...

You never had worse odds for a people than the Jewish people had 50 years ago when we were at the abyss of death and destruction, when it seemed like you could never mobilize our will to live again. And yet, within a very short time we established our independence in our ancient land, reunited our capital, revived an ancient language and produced one of the most advanced technological economies in the world. We have begun to complete a circle of peace, first with Egypt and Jordan and soon, I believe, with the Palestinians and the Syrians and the Lebanese. I think this is more than the founding fathers of Israel could have imagined 50 years ago...

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Qana remembered:

Death and revelation

EDITOR'S NOTE: April 18 marks the second anniversary of the Qana Massacre.

On that date, the Israeli army shelled Lebanese civilians who had been given refuge at a well-known UN base in southern Lebanon. It was the worst massacre of civilians under UN protection in the history of the Middle East. Journalist Robert Fisk arrived in Qana just after the shelling. The following excerpts from an interview with Fisk reveal his reactions to the shelling itself, and what he believes were the reasons behind it.

To my knowledge you were the first reporter to uncover evidence making it clear the Israelis knew exactly what they were doing, because they were flying a surveillance plane over Qana at the time the shelling took place.

I should tell you the story of Qana as I saw it originally. My wife and I were travelling on a UN convoy, back from the village of Tibnin. It was bringing empty trucks back after delivering food to villages under Israeli fire. The convoy commander, Commandant Edmund Smith and I were in the lead vehicle and we were passing from a village called Sidakin about three miles from Qana, when we heard: boom, boom, boom, over the top, a whistling sound of shells, from Qana.

And then we heard extraordinary noise, it was very frightening, the noise of shells passing over, and then boom, boom, boom onto Qana. And then the radio started going, we heard soldiers screaming: "They're attacking our headquarters, we are under fire, we are under fire!"

We couldn't hear the voice clearly, but of course people were screaming. There were people being amputated by

proximity shells, their heads were being cut off, their arms were coming off. The back gate was burst open as dozens of people with arms and legs missing crawled out, trying to escape from the building as the shells kept coming in.

Did you believe at the time it was a mistake or did you believe at the time that the Israelis knew what they were doing?

I think they knew what they were doing. The Israelis had a base in Qana for years during their occupation. They've got good maps there of exact positions, and they've got satellite positioning of their artillery. If there is the most efficient army in the Middle East how can they say Qana was hit by accident?

There was a whole series of hits leading up to Qana. We had an episode the same day in Nahatia, where a missile was fired into a building and killed nine members of the same family including a two-month-old baby. We had a missile fired in the southern suburbs which hit a little girl, we had a missile fired at Kargia which killed a young woman having a sandwich. I mean it was on and on. And they are all mistakes? I mean there is a limit. It's like a guy who gets divorced three times and keeps saying his wife does not understand him.

So why did the Israelis do it?

On the morning of the shelling an Israeli patrol went north of the occupation zone into the UN zone and arrived very close to the village of Sidakin. They stopped there to plant booby trap bombs next to a hillside presumably in the hope that Hizbullah would walk out to fire some missiles and get blown up.

This particular place is clear-

ly visible from Qana. And Hizbullah unit saw the Israeli aircraft over Qana before, during, or after the massacre.

They (Hizbullah) set up in multiple positions six hundred feet from the UN compound—let's not be romantic about this, Hizbullah frequently used to get close to UN bases in the hope that Israelis wouldn't fire back—and fired their mortars. Up on the hillside of Sidakin, these Israeli troops—who officially were not there—found mortars falling all around them and they called for help. The immediate response of the Israelis was to pour artillery fire into Qana.

But the Israelis have the capability of shooting specifically at something six hundred feet from Qana.

Very shortly after Qana itself was hit, a senior Israeli officer on the Lebanese border who was the intelligence officer for three artillery batteries—including the one that was firing at Qana—immediately red-flagged it. I have reason to believe that his warning was immediately overruled by higher command who were more concerned to get those soldiers out than they were worried about any Arab life.

It's important to keep in mind an interview in the Israeli publication "Kol Ha'ir" with some of the soldiers who were on the artillery that fired into Qana. Two of them referred repeatedly to "Arabushim," a Hebrew word that means Arabs; it's the equivalent of calling a black person "nigger."

We also know that there was a photo-reconnaissance aircraft (a "drone") in the sky over Qana during the shelling. This is an aircraft that shows live television that can be seen by the artillery crew. After the massacre the Israelis stated on

the record that they did not have a photo reconnaissance aircraft over Qana before, during, or after the massacre.

I quickly came to the conclusion, based on interviews I had with people at Qana, that this statement was a lie. First, we discovered that a young Norwegian soldier, as the shelling began, started shooting video tape. Rumor had it that there was a drone on the tape.

Then I learned that the Norwegian soldiers had been told to give the film to UN investigator General McAllen, that it had been taken to New York, and that they were not to talk about it. I was also told that the contents of the film would never be made public, and that Boutros Boutros Ghali was under great pressure from the Americans not to publish his investigation.

Two to three days later I was sitting at home in Beirut, and my mobile phone rang. When I answered, a voice gave a map reference, said, "1300 hours" and hung up. The map reference was near Qana. I was there at 1300 and waited until a white UN jeep pull up.

A UN soldier—he will have to remain anonymous—walked up to me and said, "I saw the film and I copied it; the drone is on the film."

I thought to myself I've never seen a soldier make such a brave decision. Big powers may try to cover things like this up, but little men can still sometimes win.

Nevertheless, I don't think that journalists—even if they got the story right—should take any satisfaction from what happened at Qana, or in its aftermath. Not even a cynical remark. I think terrible days may lie ahead of us.

This is an edited version based on an extended interview given to MER

Internecine conflict

THE ASSASSINATION of Muhyideen Al Sharaf has legitimately raised the question of whether the PNA and Hamas are conscious of their mutual adversary. The latest developments seem unfortunately to indicate that both parties are more interested in making allegations rather than observing the caution more obviously required in the current circumstances.

Accusations and counter accusations aside, the PNA and Hamas have both been weakened as a result of Al Sharaf's death, while Israel seems to have leveraged itself into a good negotiating position as a result of the situation.

The current sense of heightened confrontation may well be setting the stage for a qualitative change in the pattern of negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli track involving exchanges of suppression for percentages, in much the same vein as oil for food, which we have become all too familiar with.

It looks as if the PNA is considering an agreement to suppress Hamas in exchange for a withdrawal of Israeli troops from 13 percent of the West Bank. Otherwise, the PNA may be pressured into accepting the nine percent offered by Prime Minister Netanyahu.

President Arafat's position in relation to these two alternatives is a problematic one, to say the least, as the latest mission of US mediator Dennis Ross—his failure to bring about a compromise solution to the current stalemate—recently demonstrated.

Since it is politically difficult for Netanyahu to convince his coalition to increase the proposed area of West Bank withdrawals, both he and Arafat need a face-saving compromise to pave the way for Ross' next visit to the region, in order to make a solution seem more likely.

Enter Hamas. It represents a convenient trump card for both parties by which to show good-will towards each other, and consequently provide a credible argument to each other's respective constituencies.

Arafat will come clean on his promises to curb threats of terrorism against Israel, and Netanyahu will be able to say that the PNA is fulfilling its own part of the peace agreement, leaving Ross to tie the knot by proclaiming the success of a new US peace initiative.

This scenario is tempting as well as plausible as long as Arafat knows the limits of pushing Hamas at the expense of national unity, and Netanyahu knows the extent to which he can push Arafat, before a tragic incident puts the future of the peace process—and the whole concept of regional stability—in jeopardy.

We are all aware of the fact that the alternative to peace is more death and destruction, but we should also be aware of the fact that we cannot allow the path to peace to be paved with destruction also, for in this case, we would be allowing ourselves the license to use means that negate our aims and ultimate objectives.

If the seed of violence is planted in Palestinian affairs, then it is likely that the final objectives will be shaped by this seed. The issue of Palestinian national unity is very fragile, and it is with the PNA that responsibility for nourishing it lies.

Arafat has bluntly stated that he will go for a United Declaration of Independence (UDI) in the Summer of 1999. Netanyahu has vowed to re-invest the West Bank to avoid such a scheme. The consequences of both parties following through on their declared intentions are too gruesome to contemplate.

Clearly, comprehensive peace cannot be the responsibility of a single party to the exclusion of the rest. Jordan has an important role to play. It is, perhaps, the only country qualified to do so, particularly because of its organic links to the West Bank, and its peace treaty with Israel.

Business scene

■ Sales of Dar Al Dawa pharmaceuticals went up 32.5% in 1997 to JD 22.5 million. The company's net profits were about JD 5.3 million, showing a sharp rise of 98% over the 1996 figures. Its fixed assets stood at JD 11,100,449 in 1997 compared with JD 10,402,818 in 1996. Its budget jumped in 1997 to more than JD 30 million.

■ The Industrial Development Bank generated net earnings totalling JD 4.52 million in 1997 compared with JD 4.116 million in 1996. Its assets recorded 6.8% growth to reach JD 143.47 million last year against JD 134.3 million in 1996. The Bank granted 17.9 long and medium-term loans worth JD 35.93 million in 1997 to finance industrial, touristic and services enterprises. This is compared with 168 loans offered in 1996, worth JD 43.47 million.

■ Jordan's Rockwood Industries generated net profits of more than JD 5000 last year compared with losses estimated at around JD 131,000 in 1996. Its local sales comprised 15.3 tons, with outside sales of 1665 tons in 1997. The company's sales stood at JD 1,486,265 last year against a 1996 figure of JD 1,133,775, an increase of 31%.

■ The annual report released by the Jordan Islamic Bank showed a pre-tax net profit of JD 3.15 million. Its total budget was JD 650.6 million last year, with deposits of JD 552.7 million. The Bank plans to open four new branches in the near future, bringing the total number to 49.

■ The Housing Bank has doubled its profits in 1997 registering at JD 16.19 million. This is compared to JD 8.46 million in 1996. Its pre-tax profits were JD 20 million compared to JD 10.42 in 1996, this actually means a 92 percent increase. It is expected that the Bank will give out a 15 percent in profits for their shareholders. The Housing Bank has already increased its capital to JD 100 million.

■ The Jordan-Arab Investment Bank has realized profits of 1.7 million in 1997. It will distribute JD 1 million among its shareholders. Chairman of the Board at the Bank Abdel Qader Al Qadi said that its assets increased by 11.6 percent in 1997.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 15 APRIL

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFr	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Pharmaceuticals: WTO standards give imports competitive edge

By Ilham Sadeh
Star Staff Writer

THE PHARMACEUTICALS sector in Jordan is on the verge of having one of its long-term competitive advantages wiped away in a single stroke of the pen.

It is said that this sector, which is critical to Jordanian exports, could face tougher competition from outside, especially after the EU-Jordanian partnership agreement of last year, and particularly in light of Jordan's efforts to gain entrance to the WTO.

According to clauses in the agreement having to do with intellectual property rights, international pharmaceutical companies have the right to prevent local firms from producing drugs which have already been patented by those companies. This legal sticking point is likely to become the source of real challenges to local pharmaceutical production.

Nevertheless, this sector has thus far done well. Available figures show that its exports exceeded JD 130 million in 1997. This is a rise of nearly 25 percent compared with previous years.

In addition, some local companies have improved and standardized the quality of their products in order to compete

aggressively on the international market and prepare themselves for future international quality requirements.

Realizing the real limitations of the local market, Jordan drug companies have already started seeking ways to promote their products outside of the Kingdom and are even carrying out joint ventures with some neighboring countries. The idea here is to market products and exchange technical expertise and production methods.

The fortunes of local companies turned for the better during the oil-for-food deal between the UN and Iraq, especially in the number of export contracts.

Last year, pharmaceutical companies exported about \$200 million worth of pharmaceuticals to Iraq.

In terms of importance, the pharmaceutical sector is second only to the mining industry. The 16 existing pharmaceutical companies in Jordan, employing more than 4000 workers, have total investments estimated at nearly \$400 million.

Despite this, Jordan still imports heavily. About 80 percent of locally distributed pharmaceuticals are from the EU, and, according to the partnership agreement, Jordan will be opening its doors further to

drugs from the European Union.

Despite the fact that there is a three-year grace period in the agreement, local drug manufacturers worry that this won't give them enough time to put their house in order.

According to some, the length of the grace period is not sufficient for them to adapt to international standards and specifications, especially in terms of training and upgrading.

And their worry is further heightened by what they claim is a shrinking of the market, pointing out that outside competition would reflect negatively on domestic output in relationship to a market that is already low.

As the implementation of the international agreements begins, these companies will have to abide by international patent laws whose terms protect products for 20 years.

In order to highlight their problems and prepare local companies for EU pharmaceutical requirements, a two-day workshop was recently organized in Amman.

Organized by the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers (JEDCC) in cooperation with the Jordanian Association of Manufacturers of Pharmaceuticals and Medical

Appliances (JAMPA), this workshop enabled local companies to meet face to face with experts from the Drug Information Association (DIA) and the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The venue also centered on the need for drastic developments in the local pharmaceutical sector to meet global standards.

If Jordan goes for globalization, local pharmaceutical companies would have to upgrade their facilities. Since these costs would inevitably be passed down to the consumer, the prices of produced medicines would go up, and that the price difference between imported medicines and local ones would shrink.

This would obviously spell the end of the economic edge that local medical products once had over imported pharmaceuticals.

But at day's end, the issue remains a matter of conviction. Some consumers prefer imported to local medicine, even though it is more expensive.

This may simply be a matter of taste. But it could signal a lack of confidence in domestic products, and this is the matter of real concern.

In late-breaking developments it was reported that the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) has officially asked the US to put Jordan on a "priority watch list" for failing to conform to intellectual property rights.

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) had earlier placed Jordan on a special watch list of countries thought to be in violation of patent law.

Local drug producers described the action as provocative and said it was intended to degrade the quality of locally produced medicines. They stressed that Jordanian manufacturers were doing their utmost to improve the quality of their product while at the same time abiding by international patent laws.

Aramex to offer shares in New York

AMMAN—Aramex International Ltd (Aramex), the international express and freight forwarding company specializing in the Middle East and Indian Sub-Continent regions, announced that it filed a registration statement with the US Securities and Exchange Commission relating to the offer of 1 million shares of its common stock in a proposed underwritten public offering to be managed by Scott & Stringfellow Inc in Virginia. Of the 1 million shares proposed to be offered, 500,000 shares are being offered by Aramex and 500,000 shares by certain selling shareholders.

Aramex currently operates in 95 locations in 32 countries

providing express delivery and freight forwarding services from its main hubs in Dubai, London, New York and Amman primarily to from and within destinations in the Middle East and the India Sub-Continent. Aramex also holds a majority interest in a direct marketing and mail order catalogue service located in the Middle East.

A registration statement relating to these securities has been filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission but has not yet become effective. These securities may not be sold nor may offers to buy be accepted prior to the time the registration statement becomes effective.



Fadi Ghador chairman of Aramex International

Late delivery of 717 levels confidence in Boeing

By Christopher Parkes

IN LOS ANGELES Boeing's problems with the production of its new version of the 737 airliner will shrink first-quarter pre-tax earnings to \$100 million or less. A charge of \$350 million, hinted at in a recent progress report, would bring the total levied against the project since last year to more than \$1 billion.

The company issued the warning last Thursday, when Phil Condit, chairman and chief executive, said he expected pre-tax profits for the period, excluding the charge, to be between \$400 million and \$450 million.

The charge represented a "forward loss"—the amount by which estimated production costs will exceed estimated revenues from sales of the first 400 aircraft.

Condit also said the 737 would be priced lower than expected as a result of a "lower price escalation trend" and that

more overtime would be needed as output was stepped up.

Raising the prospect of further charges, he said much would depend on how the recovery plan, instituted last autumn, progressed.

The group planned to double the first-quarter's production rate of seven aircraft in the current reporting period and step it up to 21 later this year.

A charge of \$1.6 billion was taken in the third quarter of 1997 after production lines stalled. As a result, Boeing reported its first loss in 50 years in 1997.

Earlier this week the company said it was having production problems with its newest model, the 717, which might delay the roll-out planned for May. Officials said it was "re-evaluating" roll-out and test-flight dates for the aircraft, formerly known as the MD-95, which is the only McDonnell Douglas commercial project adopted whole-

heartedly by the company's new owner.

However, signs emerged this week that confidence in Boeing's ability to deliver on time might be waning. International Lease Finance Corporation was quoted as saying his company was "sceptical about Boeing's recovery and so also about the 717."

Boeing this week also admitted it had missed its first-quarter delivery target.

Boeing's military divisions suffered a setback as the defence department chose Lockheed Martin to build a new range of cruise missiles in a contract which could be worth \$3 billion. Failing to win the order for the air-to-surface stealth missile, known as Jassam, means Boeing has no immediate substitute to replace production of a similar weapon it makes for the navy, which is coming to the end of its run.

Financial Times Syndication

Privatization on the spot

Jordan's Association of Banks has just published its March issue of *Al Binook fi Al Urdun* (Banking in Jordan). In addition to news about the banking scene in the country, the issue has two important articles on privatization. They are well worth reading for both the specialist and the interested reader alike.



Business Chronicle

Saving Funds still hang in balance

A STORM in a tea cup. This is what is being said about the recent controversy surrounding the introduction of a draft law to reorganize the saving funds.

The draft created much protest in various sectors and pressure groups in the economy, including professional associations, banks, private sector bodies and the savers themselves.

Lower-House deputies also expressed their opposition. They argued that it would basically lead to confusion in the economy. So, in what was seen to be a hasty decision, many companies began liquidating their funds.

The first to do so was the Arah Bank. This in itself created considerable concern since the Arah Bank is a key player in the economy and a heavyweight in the Amman Financial Market. Other saving funds followed suit.

Initially the government stuck to its views, arguing that the purpose of the draft law was to protect the rights of employees against fund mismanagement.

The assets of about 80 saving funds are estimated to be between JD 250 million to JD 350 million. Recent statements by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Abdallah Ensour, stating that the government will not impose the law if the private sector doesn't agree to it, implies that the issue has been forgotten or at least delayed.

A few cynics even claim that the government has already shelved the law.

Some argue that the draft was essentially related to International Monetary Fund conditions by which the Jordanian economy would be prepared for compliance with the economic restructuring program launched in 1989.

Other experts argue that, after conducting a careful study of the draft law, they can see some merits in the government's position. Nevertheless, they conclude that, overall, it would be better to maintain the status quo in Jordan. This country, they maintain, has its own special social circumstances and economic needs.

We dare say that the protest against the draft law was driven by the fact that those opposed were not convinced about the government's excuses to intervene—protecting employees' rights and fighting corruption.

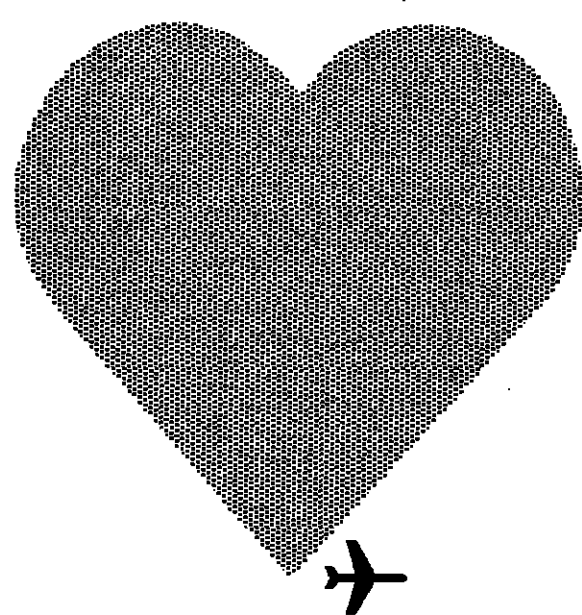
Opposition to the draft law actually became stronger last month when it was revealed that one of its articles called for the imposition of income tax.

If the government is really willing to protect small investors in these funds, some analysts argue, it could have introduced detailed restrictions to prevent their potential exploitation.

Currently, the situation is calm. Many professional associations appear to be satisfied, but they are still apprehensively awaiting the government's next step. From its side, the government has said its peace, but the issue still remains unclear. Let's wait and see.

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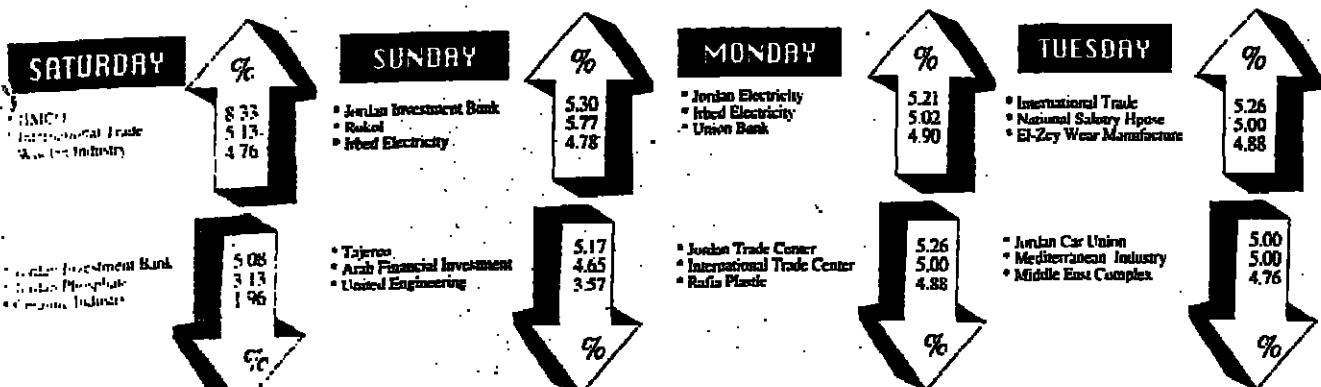
AIR FRANCE

WINNING THE HEARTS OF THE WORLD

MARKET WATCH

11-14 April

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market



General Price Point	171.490	170.590	169.920	169.820
Trade Volume	429857	842562	619884	802362
Stock Volume	393616	737409	657285	867666

Highest Traded Stocks	Arab Bank	230480	Arab Bank	29320	JOFICO	184948
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Carter coached Arafat on world role

By Curtis Wilkie

NEW ORLEANS—At a time when Yasser Arafat was regarded as a diplomatic pariah by the US government, former President Jimmy Carter secretly coached the Palestinian leader to improve his image, drafted passages for Arafat's public

speeches, and counseled other leaders of the Palestinian uprising in Israeli-occupied territories, according to a forthcoming book.

"There was no world leader Jimmy Carter was more eager to know than Yasser Arafat," the historian Douglas Brinkley wrote in *The Unfinished Presidency: Jimmy Carter's Journey Beyond the White House* to be published in May by Viking. "Carter felt certain affinities with the Palestinian: a tendency toward hyperactivity and a workaholic disposition. Both men were like modern Bedouins with airplanes instead of camels, always moving. The book draws a portrait of Carter as a messianic character, infused with righteousness, working Arab back channels to change Middle East equations."

From their first meeting in 1990, Carter and Arafat "stayed in constant communication," Brinkley writes. While Arafat agreed to "distance himself" from radical elements in the Palestine Liberation Organization, Carter encouraged the PLO chairman to describe the Palestinian plight to the "world community" in speeches designed "to secure maximum sympathy."

In one letter, written in May 1990, Carter suggested that Arafat begin by addressing the "abusive policies" of the Likud government in Israel during the early stages of the intifada. Carter recommended that Arafat say:

"Our people, who face Israeli bullets, have no weapons; only a few stones remaining when our homes are destroyed by Israeli bulldozers. Our young men and women want to learn. Since January 1988, the Israelis have closed all the Palestinian universities. 93,000 of our young people are forced to spend their days on the streets, or huddled together with their families in darkened rooms under interminable curfews."

Carter urged Arafat to use a rhetorical litany after each mention of a deprivation: "What would you do if these were your children and grandchildren?"

It could not be determined if Arafat ever used Carter's precise language, but the PLO leader did adopt a less belligerent way of talking about Palestinian distress. At the time of the Carter letter, Arafat was still struggling to overcome the pariah status he acquired during his organization's years of violent resistance. The PLO would eventually win full recognition from the United States when Arafat appeared with the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at a White House peace ceremony in 1993.

Brinkley, who interrupted plans for a three-volume biography of the 39th president to concentrate on Carter's career after leaving the White House, said he was given "full access to Carter's post-presidential papers and trip reports."

The historian conducted numerous interviews with Carter and accompanied him on trips to the Middle East and Haiti to gather material. Although the 73-year-old former president has reviewed the manuscript, Brinkley said it was agreed that the book "would be unauthorized so I would be free to draw my own conclusions."

Brinkley, a professor of history and director of the Eisenhower Center at the University of New Orleans, characterizes Carter as a "self-styled peace outlaw" who repeatedly defied conventions and raised the hackles of the State Department with his freelance diplomacy.

Carter's penchant for using CNN, controlled by his friend Ted Turner, as a mouthpiece led to clashes with President Clinton over policies involving North Korea and Haiti. After Clinton learned of telephone calls between Carter and Fidel Castro, Clinton ordered his foreign policy

apparatus to "keep Jimmy Carter out of Cuban policy," Brinkley wrote. Carter, preparing for an overseas trip, was not available for comment.

Before his quarrels with Clinton, Carter was often in conflict with President Reagan. He regained favor with President Bush, but according to Brinkley, Bush and his defense secretary, Richard Cheney, were "outraged" after learning of Carter's private attempts to persuade American allies to abandon the war buildup against Iraq in 1991.

When other Arab states withheld financial support after the PLO sided with Iraq in the Gulf War, Brinkley writes, Arafat prevailed upon Carter to undertake "a fund-raising mission for the PLO" by flying to Saudi Arabia. "By obtaining King Fahd's pledge of support, Carter had rendered the PLO an invaluable service," Brinkley writes.

Although *The Unfinished Presidency* follows the former president's efforts—operating out of the Carter Center in Atlanta—to resolve crises, monitor elections, and combat illness from Bosnia to Somalia over the past two decades, the most fascinating chapters deal with Carter's alliance with the Palestinians.

"The intifada exposed the injustice Palestinians suffered just like Bull Connor's mad dogs in Birmingham," Carter told Brinkley in a reference to a 1960s incident in the civil rights struggle in the South.

While Carter has championed the Palestinian cause, Brinkley noted, wealthy and grateful Arabs have channeled substantial contributions to the Carter Center.

Although Carter has long identified with underdogs, it took years for his Palestinian position to evolve. Early in the first year of his presidency, Carter created a diplomatic flap by referring to a Palestinian "homeland" at a town meeting in Clinton, Mass. He backed away from the controversy and excluded Palestinian representatives from his Camp David summit meeting with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1978. It was a decision Carter later came to regret.

After losing the White House, Brinkley writes, Carter struck up a relationship in the mid-1980s with Muhsin Awad, a Palestinian-American who operated a center for the study of civil disobedience in Jerusalem. "Carter helped Awad rewrite passages of his pamphlets before they were distributed throughout the occupied territories," Brinkley says. Awad was later deported by the Israelis for advocating nonviolent resistance to Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The Carter connection encouraged the Palestinian leadership in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip to challenge the Israeli occupation. Hanan Ashrawi, one of the most prominent of the West Bank Palestinians, told Brinkley: "We knew Carter was working with us. That knowledge gave us strength."

The intifada broke out in late 1987. More than two years later, Carter called upon Mary King, a friend and his former deputy director of the agency overseeing the Peace Corps, to arrange a meeting with Arafat in Paris. In the 1960s, King had been a civil rights crusader linked to New Left causes embracing the Palestinians.

As president, Carter had been constrained from meeting with Arafat by a policy developed by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and written into a law forbidding contact with the PLO. Carter called it "an unwarranted restraint" in an interview with *The Boston Globe* in 1990, shortly after his meeting with Arafat, who was then moving toward winning recognition from the United States. "It would have been easier for us to bring about more progress toward peace if the Kissinger commitment had not been made," Carter said, but he felt honor-bound not to violate the policy.

Carter felt no such restraint as a private citizen. In one of his own books, "Living Faith," he described his renegade philosophy: "Jesus went to his death and Paul spent his final years in prison rather than conform to religious and secular laws which they could not accept," Carter wrote in 1996. "We are not required to submit to the domination of authority without assessing whether it is contrary to our faith or beliefs."

Mid-East Realities



Freed POW still imprisoned by memories of brutal Iran/Iraq war

By Doug Struck

BAGHDAD, Iraq—For 16 years, Falah Hamid's life was confined to a few square feet, two thin blankets in the freezing winter and rations of half-cooked rice.

He lived because he refused to submit to death in an Iranian prison.

"I said, 'I will not die in Iran. I will not die here. I will return to Iraq.'"

Hamid, now 47, said with a tinge of bewilderment in his family home here.

Hamid emerged from an Iranian prison this past week in an extraordinary exchange of 5,584 prisoners, most of them Iraqis detained during the Iran-Iraq war. Their return evoked sharp memories here of the brutal war that saw an eight-year stream of taxis returning from the front with coffins tied to their roofs.

The war is estimated to have claimed 1 million victims from 1980 to 1988. It was fought with an extravagance of death: Draftees and young boys from both sides were sent charging without ammunition into enemy lines, forced into martyrdom in the name of country or religion.

Those casualties were a powerful anesthesia for mercy, a justification for keeping these prisoners for a decade after the war ended. The war was an inconclusive draw. Two years later, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein turned his guns toward Kuwait. In the international isolation that followed the Gulf War, Iraq is seeking to improve relations with Iran.

Hamid shrugs. "I will follow my leadership, if that is their decision," said the man who was beaten with a pipe and as a result could not walk for two years of his confinement.

Of the 322 Iranian prisoners released, three were captured during the war and 319 during other conflicts, apparently most in the uprising after the Gulf War. The release of the prisoners has



Children continue to be the main victims of the UN sanctions against Iraq. The latest batch is 25 babies. Iraqi officials say that 6500 children die each month because of the sanctions that were imposed on Iraq since 1990. The figure was only 450 before that year. Head of the Iraqi Parliament Sadoun Hamadi said that 1.5 million Iraqis have died because of the lack of food and medicine.

begin to bring the final chapter of the Iran-Iraq war to a close. Two years after the war ended, some 70,000 prisoners were repatriated. But there are no figures on how many other prisoners are being held. Iraqi officials talk of as many as 10,000 more being released in the coming days, and have discouraged publicity about the returning prisoners until the process is complete. The International Committee of the Red Cross, which supervised the prisoner swap, has said only that it has concluded the current exchange.

As the prisoners return to Iraq, they find themselves in a perplexing new reality. Hamid said he knew nothing of the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, or of the Gulf War.

or of the international sanctions that have made the bonus of 50,000 Iraqi dinar that he received upon his release unable to buy more than a tambourine band for a welcome home party.

"I do not know this place," he said of the Baghdad he saw on his return. During his imprisonment, Hamid was moved from one camp to another. Some years he spent in cells underground, some years on bare ground in tents. Always there was crowding, he said: "We would sleep with the next man's feet on our heads." Always there were beatings: "It became the normal routine."

In the first year after his capture, he was able to send three letters to his family and receive two in return. One of those mentioned his mother and brothers, but not his father. "I felt in my heart he had died," said Hamid. Kifah, his younger brother, said their father died two years after Falah was imprisoned.

"He ate nothing. He had no appetite after his son was a prisoner," Kifah said. "I am certain he died because of this."

Falah Hamid said he stopped writing when he

found pieces of his last letter ripped into shreds and scattered by the guards. He said he suffered from tuberculosis for two years.

He said the prisoners asked the guards why they were kept even after the war ended but were told only, "The war has not ended for you." Finally told he would be released, Hamid did not believe it until he saw the flag of the Red Cross on the Iran-Iraq border.

Taken to Baghdad, he was surprised he could remember his family's telephone number.

"I heard on the phone the voice of my sister. She was only 12 when I left, and now she is 28. But I knew it was her voice," said Hamid, who is unmarried. When his brother came to take him home, "I did not recognize him."

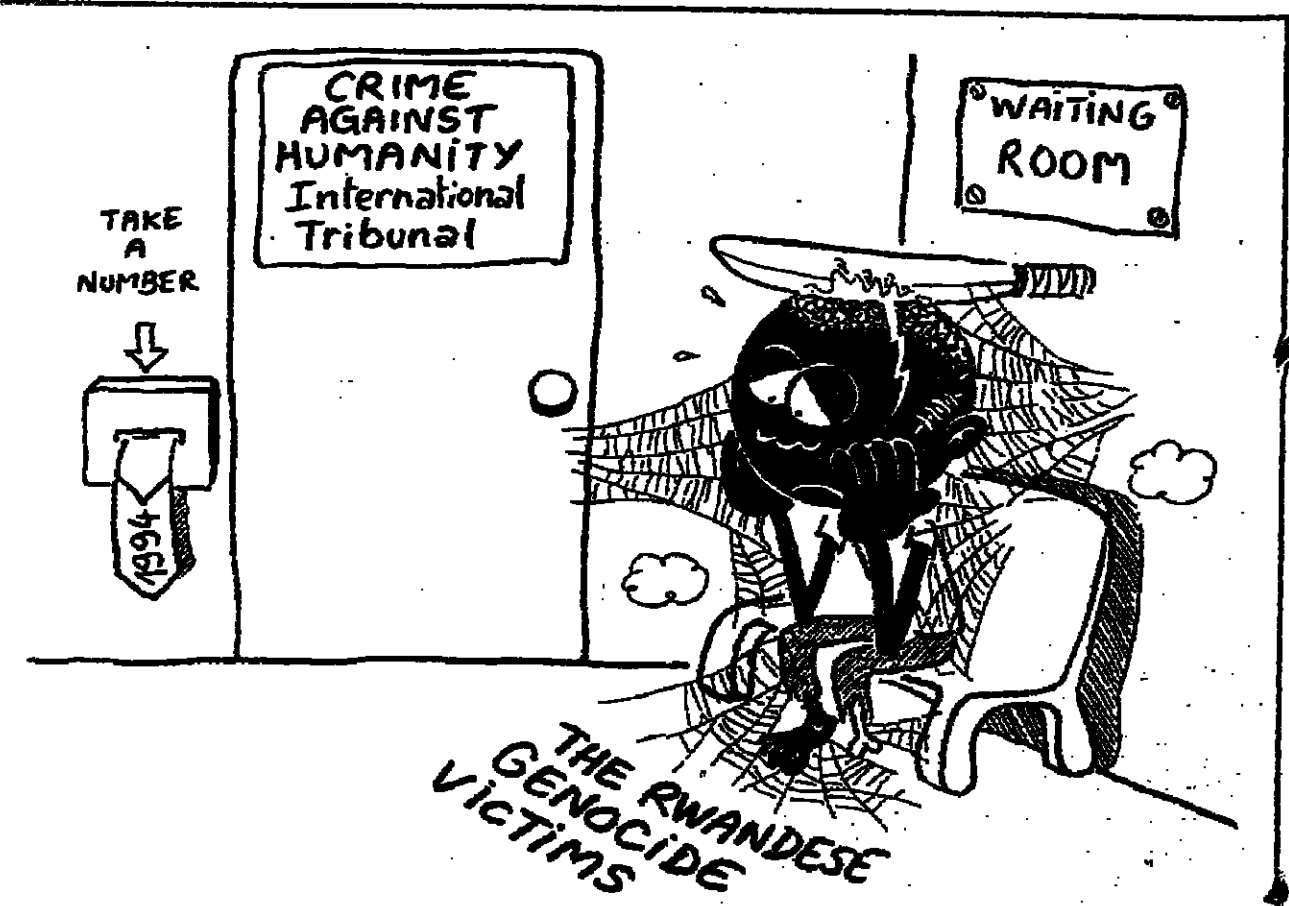
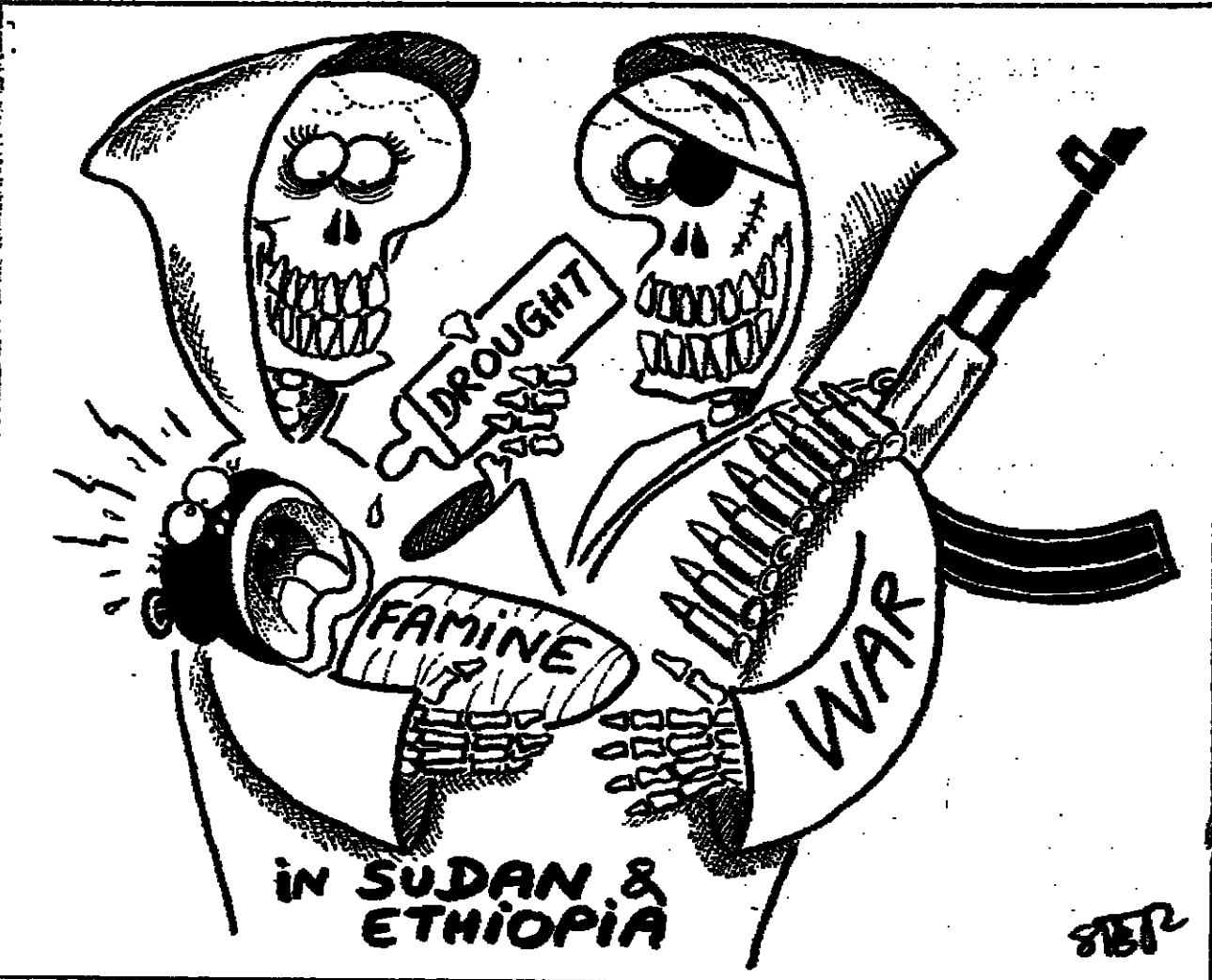
A steady stream of friends and relatives files through the house to embrace him and kiss his cheeks.

"Now I am a new baby. I am born again," Hamid said. "Come back in one year for my first birthday."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

World events according to Peray

Stephane Peray is an editorial cartoonist living in Bangkok. He contributed these cartoons to *The Star*



The Star
Tel: 652308
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cheerless

Northern Ireland: The new deal

Wheeling dealing Blair real brains behind accord

Sectarian differences remain in wake of peace

By John-Thor Dahlburg

BELFAST, Northern Ireland—By pushing the process that finally might restore peace here, Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair may have succeeded where many of his predecessors failed. It was Queen Elizabeth who once lamented that although her ministers were expending great sums to deal with "these late alterations in Ireland," all she got in return was "news of fresh losses and calamities."

That was not the reigning British monarch, by the way, but Elizabeth I, expressing royal displeasure on Dec. 1, 1598. Four centuries later, Blair was at the center of the magic formula for Protestant-Catholic co-existence in Northern Ireland and cooperation with the province's neighbor and Gaelic sister, the Republic of Ireland.

How great an accomplishment was the 44-year-old Labor leader's handling of Irish affairs, dubbed by one of his early 20th-century predecessors, Arthur James Balfour of the Conservative Party, "that most perplexing and damnable question?"

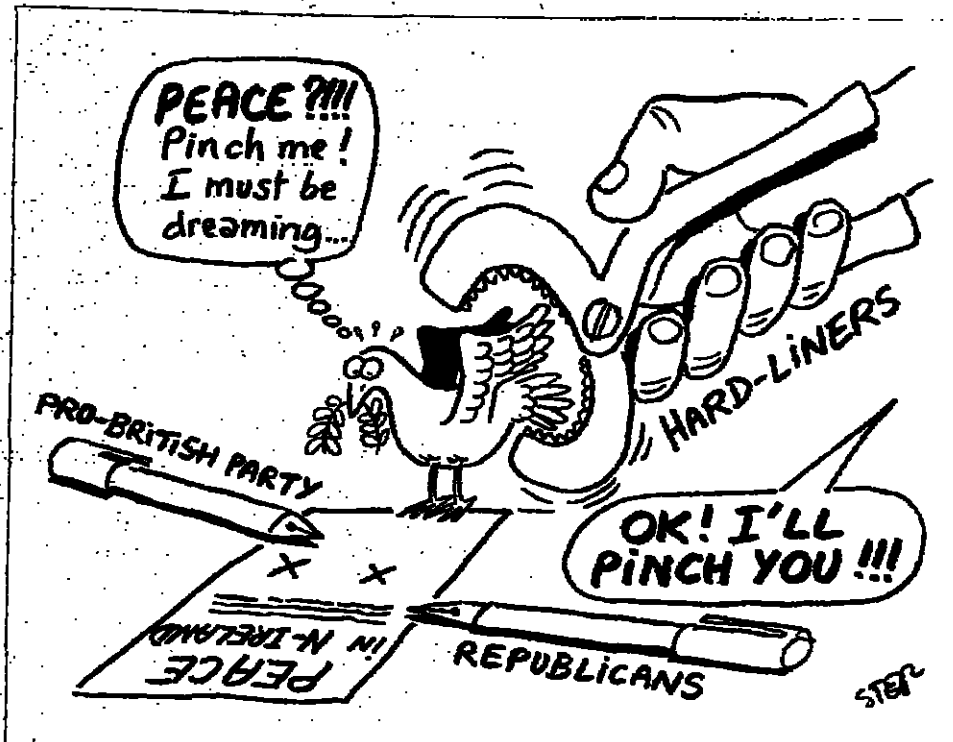
The Times of London gave its answer Saturday in a cartoon: It shows Blair walking on water.

"What we have done is get the right architecture, the right plans... for peace," said Blair, who flew from the talks in Belfast to Spain to join his wife, Cherie, and their three children for the Easter holiday. "But we have to construct the building itself."

To the devil with such modesty, some British tabloids seemed to say. They are talking about Blair—as well as Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and former U.S. Senator George J. Mitchell, the "three chairmen"—as a show in for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The compromise deal Blair helped put together, which must be endorsed by voters in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic and put in practice, was due to a conjunction of favorable political circumstances. Blair's calculated gambles, building on past achievements, commitment and perhaps a dash of luck.

First, and decisively, the landslide election victory of Blair's Labor Party in May



1997 meant that the incoming prime minister did not have to rely, as did his Conservative predecessor, John Major, on the House of Commons votes of David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party, which hamstringing Major in his ability to alter the status quo here.

When Blair took office, the process of negotiating for peace in Northern Ireland, initiated by Major and Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds in 1993, was dead.

Within two weeks of his election, Blair came here to demonstrate his determination to get the ball rolling again.

In his first major speech as prime minister, he also delivered a warning to the members of Sinn Féin, the political arm of the Irish Republican Army. The "settlement train" was leaving, with or without them.

But to prove to Irish nationalists, and the Roman Catholic minority as a whole, that he was serious about closing a deal, Blair went on to break taboos that Major could not—or would not—break. When he allowed Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams to cross the threshold at 10 Downing St. in December, it was the first such visit by an Irish nationalist in 76 years.

And Adams, branded an "IRA terrorist" by the conservative British media, was no garden-variety nationalist—he had spent 18 months in prison for belonging to a banned organization, and seven years earlier he had approved of an IRA mortar attack on 10 Downing St. itself.

The next month, Marjorie "Mo" Mowlam, 48, Blair's minister for Northern Ireland, went into the bowels of the high-security Maze prison to ask Protestant paramilitaries, responsible for most of the recent sectarian killings in Northern Ireland, not to sabotage a peace deal.

Blair once said that, as prime minister, he meant to focus on the "big picture." And no domestic issue is more important than Northern Ireland's three decades of violent sectarian strife, a legacy of Britain's checkerboard, eight-century relationship with its smaller, poorer island neighbor to the west.

At the turn of the century, successive crises over home rule for Ireland posed the gravest danger in modern times to the British system of government.

The danger did not abate with the independence of today's Irish Republic in 1921: 63 years later, the IRA tried to kill Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher by bombing a Conservative Party conference in the

English seaside resort of Brighton, narrowly missing her but killing five other people.

Confirmation of Blair's determination to find a way out of what has been called Britain's last colonial war has come from all people. Adams, whose lifelong goal has been getting the British out of the last six counties of Ireland that they possess.

Tony Blair has met more often as prime minister with the leaders of the parties in Northern Ireland than all of his predecessors throughout the Troubles, the Sinn Féin president said last week.

In addition to Adams, Blair also had to woo Trimble, leader of Northern Ireland's largest party, many of whose members were outraged by the courtesies being shown the Sinn Féin leader.

The prime minister evidently succeeded, but some Ulster Unionists still talk as though they are on their guard.

The future will tell whether the deal reached on Northern Ireland will be Blair's finest hour as prime minister of Britain.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Throughout Northern Ireland, people have been asking themselves and others what the agreement reached last Friday by eight political parties and the British and Irish governments means for them and their future. Skepticism is wrestling with optimism. People remember dashed hopes in the past. Others are daring to hope again.

people have been asking themselves and others what the agreement reached last Friday by eight political parties and the British and Irish governments means for them and their future. Skepticism is wrestling with optimism. People remember dashed hopes in the past. Others are daring to hope again.

the historic compromise: early releases for IRA prisoners, a role for its political wing, the Sinn Féin party, in a proposed new provincial assembly and requirements that this new administration cooperate in a North-South ministerial council with the Irish Republic.

"This agreement is a disaster for unionism (keeping Northern Ireland a part of Great Britain)," William Thompson, one of the dissenting lawmakers, charged. "It can never be accepted."

A grass-roots rebellion in the Protestant majority destroyed the only other formal attempt here at sharing power with

address, adding that he hoped there will be "a future rich with the life of Irish laughter, not the pain of bitter tears."

A reporter for the Independent newspaper of London who went to Portadown, a fiercely unionist town halfway between Dublin and the Irish border, found even a formal agreement will not be enough to placate some after years of strife and centuries of polarization along religious lines.

At a local pub, the journalist asked what would happen if a Catholic were to enter.

"He wouldn't be walking out of here," one patron said. "And after a peace accord?"

"He wouldn't be walking out of here," one patron said. "And after a peace accord?"

Troubles between White City, 200 households, and Whitehall, more than three times that, began three years ago. On this sloping hillside about three miles from the shipyard where the ill-fated liner Titanic was built, bands of marauding youths now regularly attack each other. Rocks and gasoline bombs have been tossed into houses.

"You get a hundred of them coming up the road, and a hundred of them from the estate up above, and I'm in the middle," said Carol Smith, 31. I complain, I get a petrol bomb through the window at night."

In both enclaves of tidy bungalows, duplexes and row houses, the "for sale" signs have gone up. There are few takers.

On April 1, authorities reported 300 "incidents," the vast majority

sectarian. Since January 1997, Adam Ingram, the province's security minister, said the "pressing need to maintain the safety of both communities" will result in the construction of Belfast's first major stretch of "security fencing" separating Protestants and Catholics since September 1994.

"It is my strong belief that political agreement will help us find ways of reducing sectarianism, and the fear caused by it," Ingram said in his announcement.

But he added, "this will not be easily achieved and may not happen as quickly as all of us wish."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Bugging equipment came from Israel

Mexican officials implicated in surveillance scheme

Citizens penalized for large families

Vietnam promoting wider options for birth control

By David Lamb

HANOI, Vietnam—Concerned by a national shortage of condoms and the highest abortion rate in Asia, Vietnam is trying to revolutionize the way this densely populated nation looks at birth control.

For the last decade, Vietnam has made family planning a top priority and has made admirable progress in curbing population growth. But birth control remains primitive, with abortion being the most common way to meet the Communist government's goal of limiting family size to no more than two children.

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Company orientation at the Radisson SAS hotel Amman

THE RADISSON SAS Hotel Amman recently welcomed Scott R. Brunce, district director of Radisson SAS Hotels Worldwide. Brunce conducted a two-day orientation program for management and supervisory staff in order to provide everyone with all necessary information on the high standards of Radisson SAS. "Participants were most impressed by the exciting

Radisson SAS
HOTEL AMMAN

expansion plans of our company in the Middle East, and are excited to see the Radisson reservation system—CURTIS—C—contribute to revenues at the Radisson SAS Hotel Amman and the Radisson SAS Resort Aqaba," says Christian Gartmann, general manager of the Jordan branch. ■

Old Amman in new Munif translation

Tales of a bygone town

By Natasha Twal
Special to The Star

Literature is a means of preserving identity and history. Abdel Rahman Munif's *Sirat Madina* (Biography of a City)—an historical novel about Amman—accomplishes exactly that, presenting a distant yet intimate world of richly detailed memories set within the inevitable yet ever-changing relationship between man and geography, all under the shadow of World War II and the imminent loss of Palestine.

In the book, Munif describes memories of Amman as it was in the early 40s, when it was little more than a large village which nevertheless was a reservoir for a large and varied ethnic community. Munif presents the local inhabitants of that time—including Syrians, Circassians, Palestinians, Chechens—wearing their various traditional clothes and speaking a wide range of dialects. The novel has received such wide acclaim in the literary world that a translation in Spanish has already been completed and released, with versions in English, French, German and Italian currently in the works.

In homage to his increasing reputation, and in celebration of the recently released Spanish translation of *Sirat Madina*, Munif, along with a nine-member delegation of the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), was

invited to visit Jordan by the Greater Amman Municipality.

The Foundation sponsors a translation and book publishing program under the title *Memoires de la Mediterranee* (Memories of the Mediterranean). Set up in 1994, it seeks to stimulate interest in translations of Arab literature by circulating already translated texts throughout Europe in order to familiarize western readers with Arab cultural heritage.

The publishing program focuses on Arab life histories, essays and literary texts with an autobiographical dimension.

Each year the Foundation's nine program correspondents, in cooperation with Arab publishers, select two to four titles for translation, subsidized by the ECF. After acceptance, the book is translated into at least three languages. This was the case with *Sirat Madina: Amman in the 40s*.

Born in Amman in 1933, to a Saudi father and an Iraqi mother, Munif is one of the giants of modern Arabic literature. His trilogy *The Cities of Salt* is recognized as a true masterpiece of modern Arabic literature, and has been translated into a number of languages. He has made genuine contributions to Arabic literature, and continues to exert a real influence that is felt throughout both western and Arab worlds, by readers and critics alike.

"What really inspired me to write this novel

was my very first visit to Amman after 35 years of absence," explains Munif. "Amman has gone through a great deal of sociological and architectural change during the past 50 years; in comparison to neighboring countries, it is the one that has changed the most rapidly and drastically."

"The first big change in Amman occurred in 1948, during the Arab-Israeli War. This was followed by another change in 1967—another war—while the last was during and after still another—the 1991 Gulf War."

"The enormity of these transformations motivated me to write something that describes the old Amman as I remember it from my childhood days," he explained.

His other novels—and they comprise an extensive list—include *Al Ashjar Waighal Marzouk*, and *Shark Al Mutawassit*.

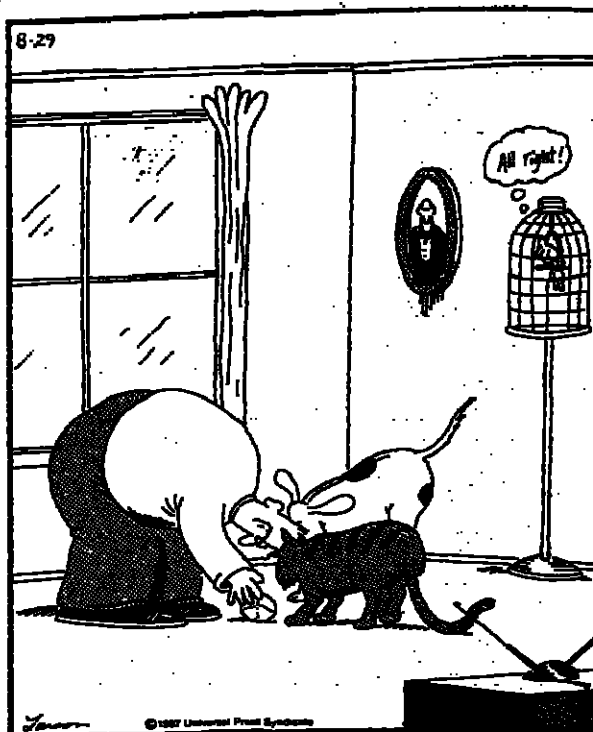
The visiting delegation from Europe include translators of his *Sirat Madina*: Mari Avino (Italian), Larissa Bender (German), Luis Miguel Canada (Spanish), Eric Gautier (French), and Samira Kavar (English) and Odile Chenal, the director of grants and programs, at the European Cultural Foundation.

In addition to a wide range of cultural-exchange events, the Greater Amman Municipality took the team on a rich sightseeing tour of Jordan. ■

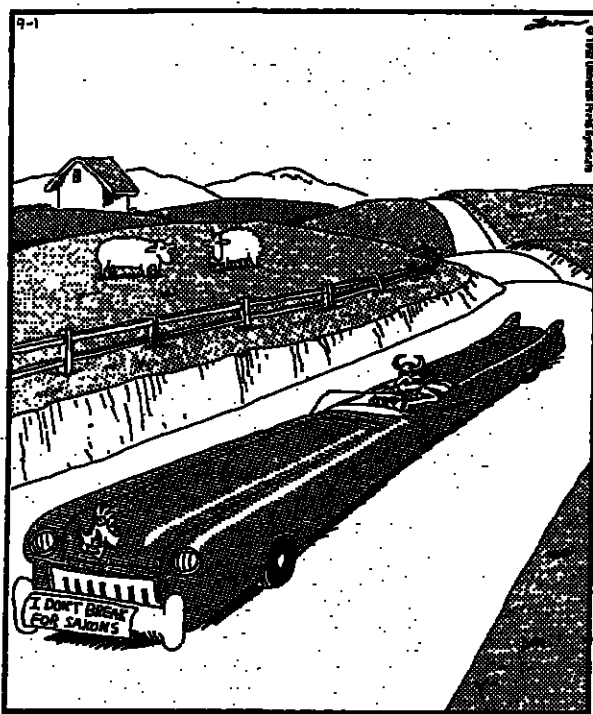


THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON

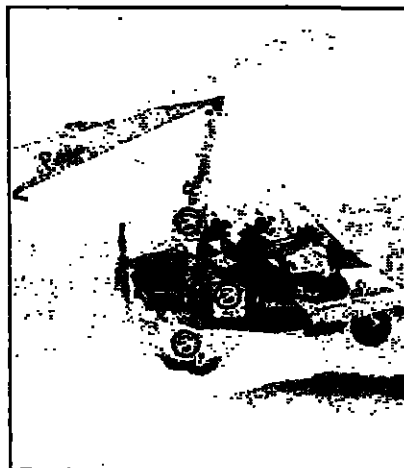


Simultaneously all three went for the ball, and the coconut-like sound of their heads colliding secretly delighted the bird.



The Viking longship was once the scourge of European roadways.

Winged motorbike circling globe



IN CELEBRATION of the 125th anniversary of the publication of *Around the World in Eighty Days*, two Britons, sponsored by GT Global, a major investment funds company, are attempting to emulate Phineas Fogg's successful attempt to circle the globe in 80 consecutive days.

The two men—Brian Milton, 55, a journalist, and Keith Reynolds, 45, a test pilot—are making their attempt in a single engine, open cockpit Quantum 912 micro-light aircraft. They took off from London on 24 March and thus far have successfully navigated their tiny craft through the air spaces over Europe and the Middle East. By now they are somewhere between Calcutta and Shanghai.

Averaging approximately 485 kilometers per day, their flight will take them to Tokyo, the Aleutian Islands and Alaska, then across the continental U.S. north to Baffin Island, Reykjavik and, with luck, on to London.

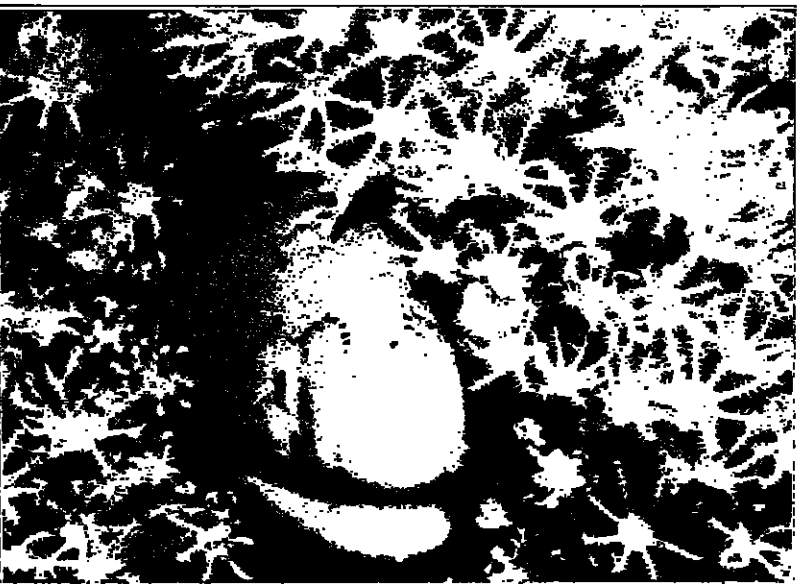
The pair arrived in Amman on 1 April from Cyprus, after a harrowing flight during which they were diverted from Lebanese airspace and forced to fly an unplanned pattern over Syria, where they were buzzed several times by a MIG 21 fighter before landing safely in Jordan. The two circumnavigators were greeted by Major Mohammed Sayen, and during their stay were guests of His Majesty King Hussein. ■

THE STAR
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4645380

Hidden treasures of Jordan

THE WONDERS of the Sea: These photographs of the corals of Aqaba taken by underwater photographer Mahmoud Al Momuni were part of an 82-picture exhibition that was held last month in Amman. It was through the auspices of the Royal Ecological Diving Society, which takes an active role in protecting marine life against environmental pollution, that the event was held. The gulf of Aqaba plays host to 110 species of hard coral, 120 species of soft coral and approximately 1000 species of fish. In addition, there are sponges, snails and sea turtles. The waters of Aqaba are replenished with fresh Red Sea water every three years, and it's a unique home for several rare and endangered species, points out Al Momuni who has been involved in underwater photography for the last 10 years. Through events like the exhibition he hopes to make people aware of the rich underwater treasures around Aqaba.

The Society was founded in 1994 by a group of young Jordanian divers who felt there was a need to protect Aqaba's rich marine life from further destruction and pollution. For further information about JREDS efforts to protect and preserve the bio-diversity of the marine ecosystem in Jordan contact: Tel/fax (962) 65679142. E-mail: jreds@nets.com.jo. ■



Michael Lunts spins tale of composer's mental life

Rachmaninov revisited

THE HOTEL InterContinental Jordan, in co-operation with Royal Jordanian Airlines, present "A Meeting Of Minds" with Michael Lunts, written by Michael Lunts and directed by Roger Leach, on 23 April 1998.

In "A Meeting Of Minds", actor and pianist Michael Lunts has combined music and drama to tell the story of events which took place in Moscow in 1901, between Sergei Vassilievich Rachmaninov and Dr Dahl, his hypnotist. After the disastrous premiere of his First Symphony, the disillusioned Rachmaninov turned to hypnosis. It was from these sessions with Dr Dahl that the young composer eventually produced what is probably his best-known work—the Second Piano Concerto.

The one-man show has been widely acclaimed.

"Michael Lunts strips the stuffiness from classical music in the excellent one-man show in which he not only portrays Rachmaninov but also plays his beloved music—for the price of one ticket you get both a play and a concert!" *The Guardian*

"..... Michael Lunts is executing a most dazzling triple play, as writer, actor and pianist..." *The Stage*

Lunts has been playing the piano for as long as he can remember and has always sought to combine his acting career with music. Based in Manchester, he works for local theater companies including the Library Theatre, Full Company, and the Wigan-based Willpower Theater Company. He teaches drama at Chesham's School of Music.

In London's West End, he played composer Sydney Cohn in the musical "On Your Toes" and toured with Bob Cartton's groundbreaking production of "Cabaret". He has filmed "The Garden of John Evelyn" with Tim West for Channel 4 Television. In between teaching, he writes and performs his one-man shows. He plays Chopin in "Winter In Majorca" and Schubert in "A Wanderer Fantasy". He is currently at work on a second play about Chopin, covering the composer's final years in Scotland. ■



AGENDA

Films

■ The Luis Buñuel film festival at the French Cultural Center draws to a close with two films: *Le fantôme de la liberté* on 20 April; and *Cas obscur objet du désir* on 27 April. Buñuel's films—often bitter-sweet romantic comedies with a heavy dose of satirical political and social commentary thrown in—are always thought-provoking. Shows are at 6:30 and 8:30 pm at the French Cultural Center, Jabal Al Weibdeh.

■ At Instituto Cervantes (near 3rd Circle, behind the InterContinental Hotel): April 16—*Palace* (1995), a children's film, in Spanish, 5 pm.

April 23—*Montoyas y Tarantos* (1989). Flamenco film in Spanish, 5 pm.

■ At the American Center, Abdoun: April 16—*Fern Gully: The Last Rainforest* (cartoon), 5 pm.

April 23—*Jurassic Park*, 5 pm. Cloned dinosaurs gobble a few overly curious scientists. Nifty special effects.

■ The British Council on Rainbow Street will feature two films:

Lectures

■ At the Goethe Institute: April 21—"The EURO - dawning of a new leading currency?" a talk in English by Hans Pinner, 6:30 pm.

■ The British Council presents another in a continuing series of lectures on literature by Dr Nicholas Linfield, "W.B. Yeats and the Evolution of Modern Poetry", April 20 at 5 pm.

■ At Darat al Funun, April 16 at 7 pm, a reading of the writings of Lebanese-American artist and poet Etel Adnan will be presented by Iraqi writer May Muzaffer, in conjunction with an exhibition of Adnan's visual work—"Artist's Books of Art and Poetry"—which recently opened. Fellow American poet Duncan McNaughton said of her poems, "Etel Adnan's work possesses maturity one had thought extinct. I don't know why so very few Americans write poetry for grown-ups, but Adnan sure does and it's good."

Exhibitions

■ At Darat al Funun, April 17, 7 to 9 pm, an exhibition entitled "A Suite of Heads" by Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan will open. The exhibit comprises 99 new graphic works, all previously unseen. The opening will include a performance of a song-cycle based on the poems of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, set to music by Agnes Bashir and sung by Tania Tamari Nasser.

■ April 21—Darat al Funun presents a group discussion with Marwan Ibrahim Alasoud, head of the exhibitions department at the Institute of the Arab World in Paris, and Jörn Merkert, Director of the Berlin Museum. Prominent Arab writer Abdul Rahman Munif will also be in attendance, 6 pm.

■ At Hammurabi Gallery, Garden Street, work by Maurice Haddad, until April 22.

■ Paintings on hand-made paper at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street, until April 25.

كشافة

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 18 - 24 April

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—The Hammerman
 4:30—French Program
 5:00—Canon The Adventurer
 6:00—Square One TV
 6:30—Neighbors
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—Discovery Magazine
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—You Bet Your Life
 8:00—Cinema, Cinema
 8:30—Prism
 9:10—Sirens
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Feature Film
 12:00—Are You Being Served

SUNDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—Cartoon
 4:30—French Program
 6:00—Skippy
 7:15—News in French
 7:30—A Tour in France
 7:35—News Headlines
 7:35—America's Funniest
 8:00—People and Places in
 Africa
 8:30—The Ultimate Guide to
 Motherhood
 9:10—Renegade
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Silent Witness
 11:10—The Upper Hand

MONDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—Cartoon
 4:30—French Program
 6:00—Riding High
 6:30—Neighbors
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Programs
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—Hope And Gloria
 8:00—Perspective
 8:30—American Chart Show
 9:10—Marker
 10:00—News At Ten



Silent Witness (Police drama), Sunday at 10:30 pm.

10:30—Law & Order
 11:10—Baywatch Nights

TUESDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—CRO
 4:30—French Program
 6:00—Small Talk
 6:30—Border Town
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Programs
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—Pride and Joy

8:00—What Would You Do
 8:30—Encounter
 9:10—Acapulco Bay
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Feature Film
 12:00—Metro Café

WEDNESDAY
 4:00—Holy Koran
 4:10—Mr Bogus
 4:30—French Programs
 6:00—Oliver Twist
 6:30—Neighbors
 7:00—News in French

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): 'Kiss The Girls'
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): 'Dantella'
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Titanic
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Titanic
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Titanic
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Ismailia Rayeh Gai (Arabic)
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Riasta Ila Al Wali (Arabic)

7:15—French Programs
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—Campus Cops
 8:00—The Health Show
 8:30—Timewatch
 9:10—King Fu
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Maria Chapdelaine

THURSDAY
 2:00—Holy Koran
 2:10—The Dinky Di's
 2:30—The Animal Show
 3:00—French Programs
 5:00—NBA
 6:00—The Burned Bridge
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Programs
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—Big Brother Jake
 8:00—Great Romance
 8:30—Lois & Clark
 8:30—Dr Quinn The
 Medicine Woman
 9:10—The Oprah Winfrey
 Show
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Feature Film
 12:00—Never the Twain

FRIDAY
 2:00—Holy Koran
 2:10—Teddy Ruxpin
 2:30—Wishbone
 3:00—French Programs
 5:00—He Shoots, He Scores
 5:30—Blue Water Dreaming
 6:00—Tarzan
 7:00—News in French
 7:15—French Program
 7:30—News Headlines
 7:35—F.R.I.E.N.D.S
 8:00—Life on the Internet
 8:30—The Album Show
 9:10—Adventures of Brisco
 County
 10:00—News At Ten
 10:30—Drama
 12:00—The Nanny

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI
 16:30—Arsène Lupin
 17:00—Cajou
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Magazine
 L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE
 16:30—Les plus petits
 17:00—Magazine
 Faut pas rêver
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Le Tour de France

LUNDI
 16:30—Un bon petit diable
 17:00—Thalassa
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Magazine scientifique
 Cinq sur cinq

MARDI
 16:30—Un bon petit diable
 17:00—Savoir plus santé
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—De cause à effet

MERCREDI
 16:30—Un bon petit diable
 17:00—Ushuaia
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—E-M6

JEUDI
 15:00—Qui est qui
 15:30—Sous vos
 applaudissements
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Atomes crochus

VENREDI
 15:00—Qui est qui
 15:30—Julie Lescaut
 19:00—Le Journal
 19:15—Allô la Terre

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M O V I E

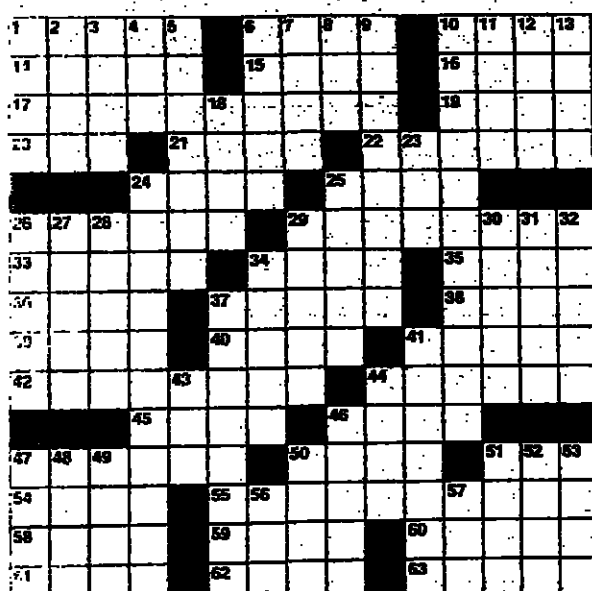


The Man In The Iron Mask

It is 1660 and France is starving. Louis XIII, the great King whose throne the Musketeers served has died and been succeeded by his arrogant and cruel heir, King Louis XIV (Leonardo Di Caprio) while at the Bastille a mysterious prisoner has lived for nearly a decade encased in an iron mask



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS**
1. Tribal
 2. Play that?
 3. Was-ocafed
 4. Cremona
 5. Dependent
 6. Desiderata
 7. Offshore
 8. rader
 9. Installation
 10. Tire trouble
 11. Black bird
 12. "I Came"
 13. "Flare"
 14. Out-witted
 15. De-Laurens
 16. Hated rod
 17. With pluck
 18. Owl well
 19. necessity
 20. Army shreds
 21. puzzle
 22. night's
 23. need
 24. "Exact time"
 25. indicator
 26. Leslie Caron
- DOWN**
1. So long
 2. Staw in the wind
 3. Vehicle
 4. Greek letter
 5. Projectile
 6. Television
 7. spot, brially
 8. Sea whid
 9. Author
 10. Nicholas
 11. Wordworth
 12. Pocketsized
 13. Soup du
 14. B'way
 15. producer
 16. George
 17. Penny
 18. Veneration
 19. Traffic sign
 20. Dreamer's
 21. milea?
 22. Fork past
 23. Goble of
 24. Israel
 25. mathematic
 26. an
 27. Minic
 28. Elusive

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: Things will move quickly with the moon in agile Gemini.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Count your money and pay your bills. It's important that you get it done so you can go on a wild shopping spree.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Don't take no for an answer, especially in romance. One who initially resists could be a good long-term investment.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Don't schedule travel or a date. Rest instead. A partner's friends upset your plans. A long-distance call may have to replace a trip.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Friends are your best source of tutoring. They'll get you headed in the right direction. Schedule fewer stimulants and lots more quiet time.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Go along with an older person's agenda rather than arguing. You should have your next course of action pretty well plotted out.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Contact with a foreigner could lead to a great opportunity. You'll overcome the language barrier easily. You'll have way too many new assignments. You'll be inundated, scurrying to keep up.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Pay bills so you won't have to worry. Don't forget an assignment that's due. You can get a loved one to help, but the responsibility is still yours.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Make time for your partner or there'll be a bigger problem later. Hassle it out while it's still relatively small.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Watch for career opportunities. The workload's intense but could lead to a fabulous offer. The action is fast. Snooze and you'll definitely lose.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). A secret rendezvous could lead to a dream coming true. Put in extra hours of work and you'll make extra money. That'll be useful for a domestic project.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your workload is intense. Don't be late for work. The boss would definitely notice.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Learn from a partner and teach something you know, too. That'll put you in good shape for the action that's scheduled.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You've got enough drive and determination to accomplish just about anything this year. Start by making more money.

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Bridge

Each Trick In Its Time

Neither vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
 ♠ 10 5
 ♥ J 6 4 3
 ♦ 5 4
 ♣ A 10 7 5 4

WEST
 ♠ 9 8 6
 ♥ A 10 9 8
 ♦ 2
 ♣ Q 9 8 6 3

EAST
 ♠ 3 2
 ♥ K Q 7
 ♦ K J 10 8 7
 ♣ K J 2

SOUTH
 ♠ A K Q J 7 4
 ♥ 5 2
 ♦ A Q 9 6 3
 ♣ Void

The bidding:
 East South West North
 1♣ 4♣ Pass Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠

The good book tells us there is a time for everything under the sun. To take a trick before its time can be disastrous.

No textbook will tell you what to bid with the South hand after East opens the bidding with one diamond. South's decision to jump to four spades is certainly a practical solution to an annoying problem.

West led the deuce of diamonds. Declarer captured East's king with the ace and tried to cash the queen. Unfortunately, East ruffed and returned a trump, and declarer could not come to more than nine tricks. Try it for yourself.

South's continuation of the queen of diamonds at trick two was native at best. In light of East's opening bid, West's lead was more likely to be a singleton than from three to an honor, so playing the queen of diamonds was tantamount to giving up the ghost.

The winning play is not easy to spot. After taking the ace of diamonds, declarer must continue with a low diamond! The best defense can do is for East to win and shift to a trump. Declarer wins in hand, ruffs a diamond with the ten of trumps and discards a diamond on the ace of clubs. A club ruff permits declarer to come to hand to draw trumps, and the queen of diamonds can then be cashed. Declarer collects six trump tricks, two diamonds and a diamond ruff and the ace of clubs—the 10 tricks contracted for.

Observe that the contract can be defeated. If West leads a trump, the defenders can thwart South from ruffing a diamond on the table, and nine tricks are all declarer can manage.

Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DAUTI
 MY PUB
 RACLAN
 KLUSCE

Answer: WITH "O O O O O" O O O O

ANSWERS: AUDIT BUMPY CARNAVAL SUCKLES
 TALK
 ANSWER: How pilots avoid mistakes.

Words of Wisdom

Contentment isn't measured by wealth.

The tide must be taken when it is at hand.

One enemy is too many, while 100 friends are too few.

If you want to be well-served, serve yourself.

Hope left un nourished makes a desert of the heart.

If you want to be safe, don't feel compelled to be secure.



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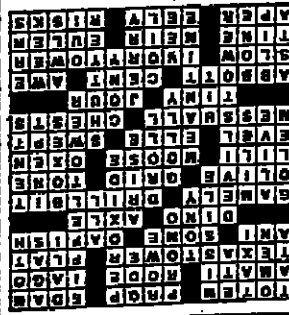
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Death Keeps

No
 Calendar.



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Why we decorate eggs

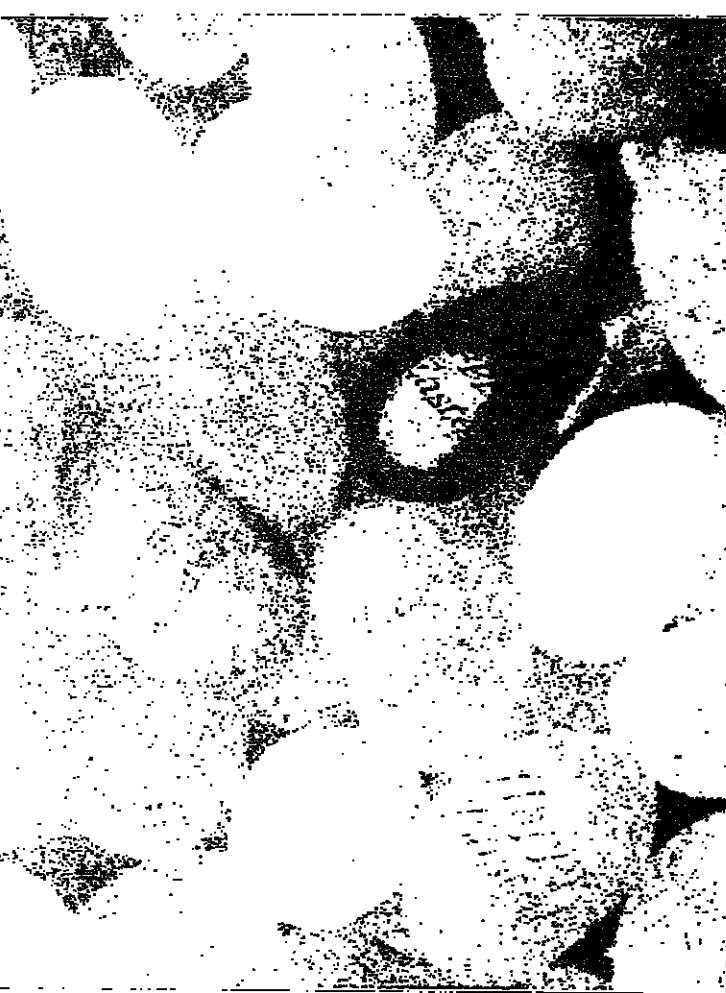
Old Polish legends blended folklore and Christian beliefs and firmly attached the egg to the Easter celebration. One legend concerns the Virgin Mary. It tells of the time Mary gave eggs to the soldiers at the cross. She entreated them to be less cruel, and she wept. The tears of Mary fell upon the eggs, spotting them with dots of brilliant color.

THE EGG is nature's perfect package. It has, during the span of history, represented mystery, magic, medicine, food and omen. It is the universal symbol of Easter celebrations throughout the world and has been dyed, painted, adorned and embellished in celebration of its special symbolism.

Before the egg became entwined with the Christian Easter, it was honored during many rites-of-spring festivals. The Romans, Greeks, Chinese, Egyptians and Persians all cherished the egg as a symbol of the universe. From ancient times eggs were dyed, exchanged and shown reverence.

In Pagan times the egg represented the rebirth of the earth. The long, hard winter is over, the earth has forth and was reborn just egg-miraculously burst forth with life. The egg, therefore, was believed to have special powers. It was buried under the foundations of buildings to ward off evil; pregnant young Roman women carried an egg on their persons to foretell the sex of their unborn children. French brides stepped upon an egg before crossing the threshold of their new homes. With the advent of Christianity the symbolism of the egg changed to represent not nature's rebirth, but the rebirth of man. Christians embraced the egg symbol and likened it to the tomb from which Christ rose.

Old Polish legends blended folklore and Christian beliefs



and firmly attached the egg to the Easter celebration. One legend concerns the Virgin Mary. It tells of the time Mary gave eggs to the soldiers at the cross. She entreated them to be less cruel, and she wept. The tears of Mary fell upon the eggs, spotting them with dots of brilliant color.

Another Polish legend tells of the time Mary Magdalene went to the sepulchre to anoint the body of Jesus. She had with her a basket of eggs to serve as a repast. When she

arrived at the sepulchre and uncovered the eggs, lo, the pure white shells had miraculously taken on a rainbow of colors.

Decorating and coloring eggs for Easter was the custom in England during the middle ages. The household accounts of Edward I, for the year 1290, recorded an expenditure of eighteen pence for four hundred and fifty eggs to be gold-leafed and colored for Easter gifts.

The most famous decorated

eggs, tiny cherubs, jewels and elegant fabrics, braids and trims, to adorn the eggs. They are separated, delicately hinged and glued with epoxy and transparent cement, then when completed, they are covered with a glossy resin finish. Although the omens and the mystery of the egg have disappeared today, the symbolism remains, and artists continue in the old world tradition of adorning eggs.

By Philippa Davenport

LAMB, CHICKEN and rabbit are the traditional choices of meat for Easter celebrations in Britain, but few families now are large enough to justify cooking a whole saddle of lamb.

Even a leg may be too much to down at one sitting, and there is little taste today for eating the remains all week — "hot on Sunday, cold on Monday, hashed on Tuesday, minced on Wednesday, carried on Thursday, brot on Friday, cottage pie on Saturday," as the Victorian jingle put it.

For one thing, the leftovers from a roasted joint are more expensive than, and not necessarily as good as, fresh meat from cheaper cuts for making many of these so-called rechauffé dishes.

Second, meat plays a far less important role in our menus today, no longer making a routine daily appearance at table.

Fish has come to the fore, one main meal per week will probably be vegetable-based, and pasta and rice with a whole chicken or rabbit may be more than today's one or two person households will want to cook.

It is true that a poussin is small enough to be polished off pretty quickly, but such an intensively-bred juvenile bird has so little flavour that it seems a waste of money to buy it. You will get far better value from, say, the dark meaty thighs of properly reared and matured free-range or organic chicken.

Rack Of Lamb With Potatoes & Artichokes

This little joint of best end of lamb cutlets is tailor-made for small numbers. I shall probably serve it on Easter Sunday, preceded by purple sprouting broccoli with Hollandaise sauce for dipping, and follow it with a classic cold lemon soufflé.

Autumn-born Dorset lamb is good just now, but do not let your butcher trim it too assiduously. I love crisply cooked lamb fat when sizzling hot. Even if you do not, it ought to be there to protect and baste the meat as it cooks. Paint the lamb lightly all over with olive oil, grind black pepper over it, then rub the fat only with salt.

Scrub and thickly slice some small waxy potatoes (not Jersey Royals: the few that creep into the marketplace this early are grown under glass, weak on flavour, high on price). Boil for 10 minutes or

until almost done, drain well and turn them in a little olive oil and black pepper in a shallow dish or roasting pan.

Lay the lamb, fat side up, on a grid suspended across the potatoes and roast for 15 minutes at 220°C (425°F) (gas mark 7). Reduce the temperature to 200°C (400°F) (gas mark 6), tuck some tender, halved artichoke hearts in among the potatoes, and roast for 10-15 minutes more. Then let the lamb relax for 10 minutes or so before stirring a

In the absence of suitable artichokes, boil some young broad beans (they will probably have to be frozen) and add them to the potatoes at the same time as the herbs.

Chicken With Tarragon Cream, Leeks & Barley

This is my contemporary variation on the old-fashioned and delicious but distinctly richer chicken in a tarragon cream sauce. Chicken thighs are sautéed to drain them of fat and to crisp the skin as

time but turn them occasionally and lower the flame to seal and lightly colour the fleshy underside without toughening the meat. Cut the leeks (tender green parts as well as white) into very fine rings so they fall in ribbon loops. Stir-fry them very gently in the sauté pan; 3-5 minutes should be enough to wilt and soften them.

Remove them and deglaze the pan with 100 milliliters of good chicken stock enlivened with 1 teaspoon tarragon wine vinegar. When greatly reduced, stir in 4 tablespoons double cream or crème fraîche and about 2 teaspoons fresh chopped tarragon. Let the amalgam bubble up briefly, draw the pan away from the heat, add the leeks and turn them to anoint them creamily for serving.

Small Stew Of Rabbit With Fennel & Olives

Rabbit, like pigeon, is a meat that is best cooked either very briefly or at considerable length. Here I have opted for the former and have used 4 thick slices of saddle to serve two people, each piece weighing about 75-80 grams each. First, make an aromatic mix with 1 teaspoon of crushed fennel seed, the leaves from a couple of sprigs of thyme, the zest of half a clementine or mandarin orange, 2 finely chopped garlic cloves and half a finely chopped green chilli.

The rabbit and the vegetables should be cooked simultaneously in separate pans. Start the rabbit first. Dust the pieces of meat with seasoned flour. Fry them over gentle heat in a little hot oil in a sauté pan for 5 minutes to colour lightly all over.

Stir in half the aromatics and pour on 4 tablespoons of dry vermouth. As soon as the liquid bubbles up, cover with a sheet of greaseproof paper and a well-fitting lid. Cook over a minimal flame, using a heat-diffuser mat, for 10 minutes, turning the meat once or twice. Add the chopped fennel fronds and some black olives and let the rabbit and its juices rest in a low oven until the vegetables are ready. For the vegetables, colour wedges cut from a smallish fennel bulb in a smidgen of hot olive oil in a flameproof casserole, and remove. Add 150 grams or so waxy potatoes cut into chunks, and the remaining aromatics.

Stir for a few seconds, pour on 250 milliliters stock and bring to the boil. Cover tightly and simmer for 5-10 minutes. Then lay the fennel wedges over the potatoes, cover tightly again and cook for 10 minutes more or until the vegetables are done to your liking.

Pound a few saffron filaments. Steep them in a couple of spoonfuls of the vegetable broth for half a minute, then cream the golden liquid smoothly into 2 tablespoons of mayonnaise. Stir this mixture into the vegetable stew. Add some fresh chopped parsley, the rabbit and every drop of its juices, and let the stew stand for 5 minutes before serving in soup plates.



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مركز التجارة

The Star

Edited by Abdul Hamid Adnani

Emotional farewell for Wihdat striker Abdel Minem



AMMAN (Star)—Retiring Wihdat striker and Jordanian National Team player Jihad Abdel Minem bid farewell to football after his final game against Al Ahli in Al Hussein Sports City. The match was attended by 17,000 spectators.

The match between the two teams was made all the more significant by the presence of famous Egyptian goal-keeper Ahmad Shobair, who played for Al Wihdat.

The match began with a top goal for the player, but Badawi scored two goals to give Al Ahli the lead. The score remained 2-1 for the rest of the first half. During half-time, Jihad shook hands with all of his team-mates and was then greeted by a standing ovation from the crowd in what was a highly charged emotional moment.

Al Nasr wins Asian title

RIYADH—A French coach, Bulgarian striker, Qatari forward and a Saudi team won the Asian Cup Winners Cup title Sunday after defeating Samsung Suwon of South Korea 1-0.

Al Nasr of Saudi Arabia scored in the opening minutes and the team held tight to a defensive strategy that

resulted in a victory in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Bulgarian striker Hristo Stoichkov received a superb pass from Qatari forward Mohammed Al Khatib in the 12th minute to score the only goal of the match.

The Koreans pressed hard in the second half and controlled the game but failed to score.

Stoichkov and Anzi are on loan to the Saudi club. Stoichkov's deal was reportedly worth \$200,000 for only two matches.

South Korean crisis may topple World Cup stadium plans

SEOUL—Plans to build new stadiums in South Korea for the 2002 World Cup finals may be shelved due to the recent financial crisis, a presidential Blue House source said.

"It is expected that the prime minister will recommend to President Kim Dae-jung during a cabinet meeting sometime this week to scrap plans for new stadiums," a Blue House official said, declining to be identified.

The recommendation would be that we make do with what we have," the official said.

South Korea is to co-host the 2002 finals with neighbors and rivals Japan. But Korean leaders have been forced to slash expenses in all areas to keep the country afloat after an economic crisis forced the government to accept a \$58.35 billion rescue package from the International Monetary Fund in December.

President Kim has continually raised questions about the construction of 10 new stadiums for the World Cup. But his administration has met resistance from both World Cup organizers and soccer fans.

FIFA said it was aware of the reports from Seoul and would confront the issue at the next planning meeting. "As we don't know anything about this officially, it is hard to react," said FIFA communications director Keith Cooper in Zurich.

"Right now it's speculation but we have a planning group meeting shortly and we'll find out the true story then. I can't say much more than that it's a bit of a tough situation," he said.

No date had yet been set for the meeting, although Cooper said it would be before the start of the France 98 World Cup on June 10 in Paris.

A decision not to construct the promised stadiums, which were an integral part of the South Korean bid, would be a major blow to FIFA's reputation after it made the unprecedented decision to have South Korea and Japan as co-hosts. Some 1,300 people, including heads of soccer-related organizations and local fans gathered at Tongdaemun Stadium in central Seoul on Monday to demand that the new sports facilities be built.

Lee Young-soo, an instructor in the sports department at Sejong University, who was at the rally said, "We need to build new stadiums to provide more jobs. It's also an investment in the future."

Some advocates of the new facilities say stadium construction would create at least 200,000 new jobs for a job-thirsty labour market and boost regional economies by helping out suppliers and local construction firms.

Officials preparing for the World Cup seemed to be caught off guard by moves to scrap the building plans and were ready to defend the original project.

The organizing committee officials say the price tag for a new stadium in Seoul makes sense when considering costs for renovating an Olympic Stadium which does not meet FIFA standards.

Choi Chang-shia, general-secretary for the organizing committee, said the Chamsil Olympic Stadium, site of the 1988 Summer Games, opening and closing ceremonies, would require modifications, such as bringing seats closer to the field, at a cost of more than 900 billion won (\$612 million).

Choi said about two trillion won would be needed to build the 10 new stadiums. But he said actual investments for the World Cup would be around 800 billion won, as some of the stadiums under construction will be used to stage other sports events including the 2002 Asian Games.

Cairo grabs prize in first local rugby tournament

By Abdul Hamid Adnani
Special to The Star

A TEAM from Cairo was the winner of the first Prince Abdullah Trophy in rugby held at the Al Hussein Sports City. They beat Jordan's first team 12-6 in the final match. The tournament witnessed the participation of six teams from four countries—Jordan, Cyprus, Egypt and Lebanon.

Jordan struggled against the heat and dust and took the lead in the first half 6-0 but Cairo's huge size and the high fitness level of its players enabled the Egyptian team to come from behind and take the match, 12-6. Jordan played well against the more experienced Cairo squad, and despite the fact it didn't win the title, the match provided a great opportunity for a Jordanian rugby team in action.

HRH Prince Ra'ad, presenting the winning team with the trophy, said he hoped to see more local teams in the coming events.

HRH Prince Abdullah had attended the training session, but did not take part in the matches. Cairo had a smooth ride to the championship match after defeating Episkopi Eagles 24-7 and Cyprus Stags 64-3. Jordan also reached the key final game easily, beating Beirut 27-0 and coming out on top against the only other Jordanian team.

In other matches Episkopi Eagles topped



Prince Raad hands over cup to the winners

Beirut 32-20 to win the "British Bank Plate Competition" and Cyprus Stags beat the Jordan Falcons 27-0 to clinch the "Wooden Spoon Trophy."

Scotland boss to test hopefuls

GLASGOW—Scotland manager Craig Brown indicated that he may take the opportunity to experiment in the World Cup warm-up game against Finland next week.

Brown, who named his squad Tuesday for the match at Hibernian's Easter Road ground, promised last month before the B team match with Wales that if any player made an impact that night he would be promoted.

Celtic pair keeper Jonathan Gould and defender Tosh McKinlay, were impressive as was Hearts centre back Paul Ritchie. Brown may now be tempted to call up Gould next week and give Wimbledon keeper Neil Sullivan a run-out against Norway B the previous evening at Tynecastle.

McKinlay's situation is a bit more complex. He skipped the team to victory against the Welsh but cannot get into the Celtic starting line-up even though Stephen Mahe is injured. His lack of match practice could count against him although Brown may feel he deserves a place in the senior squad.

Ritchie may have to bide his time as Scotland have strength in depth at the heart of their defence. Colin Hendry, Colin Calderwood, Matt Elliott, Christian Dailly and David Weir are all ahead of the Hearts youngster in the pecking order.

The Finland game will be Scotland's last World Cup

warm-up match on home soil before France. Brown is unlikely to tinker with his regular squad too much, although he will be praying some of his key players stay injury free. He was without the likes of John Collins, Kevin Gallacher, Paul Lambert, Craig Burley and Gordon Durie for the match against Denmark last month. The result was that Scotland went down 1-0 with Rangers star Brian Laudrup getting the winner.



Brown

Nigeria names squad for German friendly

LAGOS—Nigeria's soccer authorities named the 22-man squad for the World Cup warm-up against European champions Germany on April 22, the national news agency reported on Friday.

Only one of the squad plays for a Nigerian club. The rest are based abroad. Squad:

Goalkeepers: Ike Shorunmu (FC Zurich), Willy Okpara (Orlando Pirates). Defenders: Jero Shukpoku (Reggina), Uche Okechukwu (Fenerbahce), Uche Okafor (Kansas City), Godwin Okpara (Strasbourg), Taribo West (Inter), Patrick Paschal (Glentworth), Ganiyu Ajide (Julius Berger).

Midfielders: Sunday Olshe (Ajax Amsterdam), Mutin Adeniji (Real Sociedad), Steven Musa (FC Saarbrücken), Austin "Jay Jay" Okocha (Fenerbahce), Wilson Oruma (Lens).

Strikers: James Ofori (Anderlecht), Nwankwo Kanu (Inter), Tijani Babangida (Ajax Amsterdam), Gabriel Okolosi (Waldorf Mannheim), Daniel Amokachi (Besiktas), Jonathan Akpoborle (VfB Stuttgart).

Upstart Bafana Bafana on a roll South Africa: The Boys are back

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—Apartheid is history, along with the second-class status given to the black majority and its favorite sport, soccer. Now, heading into their first World Cup, the South Africans want a lot more than just a good showing. They want victories.

South Africa, banned for 29 years from international soccer because of apartheid, is one of five African countries among the 32 nations in the biggest World Cup to date.

Almost six years after FIFA lifted the ban, the team called Bafana Bafana (Zulu for The Boys, or literally Boys) has risen from the obscurity of isolation to claim one African championship, finish runner-up for a second and qualify for the World Cup on its second try.

The climb has been difficult, without a victory against any European or world-class side so far. But coach Philippe Troussier and the soccer-mad nation hope that all changes in France.

"I'm very optimistic that South Africa can do well and not just be passengers," said Troussier, a Frenchman who took over just last month.

The World Cup draw was not kind; France, Denmark and a disciplined Saudi Arabia in pool C. Until its second-place finish at the African Nations Cup tournament in February, South Africa appeared certain to watch



the second round on television.

Bafana Bafana had failed to win a match since August 1997 and were in disarray. They were no longer using their trademark tough-

marking defense and opportunistic attack and instead showed the selfish, undisciplined play common in Africa.

Clive Barker, who coached South Africa to its 1996 African Nations Cup victory, quit in December after a disastrous Confederations Cup tournament in which Bafana Bafana were the only winless side, tying the Czech Republic and losing to Saudi Arabia and Uruguay.

Then Jomo Sono, the former pro star, took over as interim coach with the task

of laying a foundation for Troussier, who was under contract in Burkina Faso until March.

Sono immediately dropped some veterans who were favorites under Barker—midfielders Doctor Khumalo and Eric Tinkler, defender and former captain Neil Tovey, goalkeeper Andre Arendse—and brought in young players such as Benedict McCarthy, an Ajax Amsterdam forward given few chances previously.

In two months, Sono put together a scrappy, quicker team that played a more challenging style. The winless streak continued until South Africa's third match of the opening round at the African Nations Cup tournament in Burkina Faso, when

McCarthy scored four goals in the first 20 minutes in a 4-1 triumph over Namibia and a quarter-final berth. A 2-1 victory over Morocco with goals from McCarthy and David Nyathi, another forgotten player under Barker, gave South Africa a semifinal spot and the satisfaction of beating Africa's top-ranked side.

McCarthy then scored both goals in a 2-1 overtime victory against Congo, and despite a 2-0 loss to Egypt in the final, he finished tied as leading tournament scorer with seven goals.

"There was a lot of pressure on us as defending champions and we handled it well. This will stand us in good stead for France," captain Lucas Radebe of Leeds United said after the loss to

Egypt. "There has been an incredible bond forged between all the players."

Now Troussier plans to assess players from the two eras under Barker and Sono and create a mix of experience and youth that he can mold as his own. "It was very important to bring in young talent, fresh minds and ambitious souls," said Troussier, who has a long resume in Africa, including a stint in South Africa coaching the Soweto township-based Kaizer Chiefs. "That creates competition and commitment from everyone, including the dropped players."

He has consistently mentioned one name, Khumalo, the midfielder with a deft passing touch and good instinct when insisting that veterans axed by Sono will be reconsidered. Khumalo, formerly of the Columbus Crew in the United States, would be a potential feeder for McCarthy and Phil Masinga, the Bari-based striker who is South Africa's all-time leading scorer.

Other veterans who could get a second chance are Arendse and Tinkler, while Radebe, Masinga, Nyathi of St Gallen, Mark Fish of Bolton Wanderers, speedy Helman Mkhalele of Kayseri, and John Moshoeu appear set as the nucleus.

"I don't have time to teach," Troussier said. "That's why I'm looking for operational players who are ready now."



MONDIAL NEWS

Upset Vladioiu to miss World Cup

BUCHAREST—Cologne striker Ioan Vladioiu said he would not play for Romania in the World Cup finals after all. Vladioiu and coach Anghel Iordanescu appeared to have patched up their differences after a "simple misunderstanding." But Vladioiu said, "Iordanescu gave me false hopes earlier this month that I'd be in his sights for the World Cup finals, but he ignored me again for the decisive warm-up game against Belgium." Vladioiu was not among a record number of 17 foreign-based Romanian players named by Iordanescu to be on stand-by for the April 22 game against Belgium. Vladioiu is the third player—after Stuttgart striker Florin Raducioiu and Moenchengladbach mid-fielder Ionut Lupescu—to refuse to join the Romanian squad.

UK hopes France will bar Nigeria's ruler

LONDON—Britain said it hoped France would stick to the letter of European Union sanctions against Nigeria by barring the African nation's ruler from the World Cup later this year. The sanctions, which include a ban on sporting links, were imposed in 1995 in response to widespread reports of human rights abuses. EU ministers later exploited a loophole to allow Nigeria to take part in the finals. But Britain is opposed to the idea that Nigeria's ruler



General Sani Abacha should be allowed to watch his team in the finals, especially since the sanctions include a visa ban on senior officials. "We would prefer loopholes which would allow people like Abacha into France to be closed," a Foreign Office spokesman said by telephone.

"A visa ban would prevent him attending, although enforcing the sanctions is up to EU member states." The Observer said Abacha—set to seek election as civilian president a month after the World Cup ends—was determined to attend the finals since soccer was a great vote-winner in Nigeria.

Last month the Dutch foreign minister urged that a friendly game between the Dutch side and Nigeria be scrapped, saying it conflicted with the EU sanctions. The government later said it would not cancel the game. In February the European Parliament urged EU governments to commit themselves to imposing tougher sanctions on Nigeria, saying existing sanctions had been ineffective.

Iran coach will pick squad in May

TEHRAN—Iran's coach Tomislav Ivic said he would decide which players to send to the World Cup a month before the finals start in France in June.

Ivic said Iran would prepare with a friendly this month against Kuwait followed by a four-nation tournament in Tehran and a 20-day training camp in southwestern Iran, Iranian television said.

The match with Kuwait is scheduled for April 14 in Tehran or the northwestern city of Tabriz, press reports said.

The April 20-22 tournament in Tehran will feature World Cup finalists Jamaica, as well as Ghana and Hungary. "We are presently practicing the 4-3-3 and 4-4-2 formations," Ivic said.

Iran's last stage of preparations would begin a month before the World Cup finals with a training camp to be held in Europe, the Croatian said. Ivic said he would wait until then before deciding on his squad for the finals.

Iran played three friendlies in France last month, their first matches in the country since 1976. They beat first division Nantes but lost to En Avant Guingamp and Montpellier.

Iran met Yugoslavia in their opening World Cup group match in St Etienne on June 14. They face the United States in Lyon a week later and Germany in Montpellier on June 25. They beat Australia in a play-off to become the last qualifiers for the finals which begin on June 10. It is the first time they have reached the finals since the 1978 tournament in Argentina.



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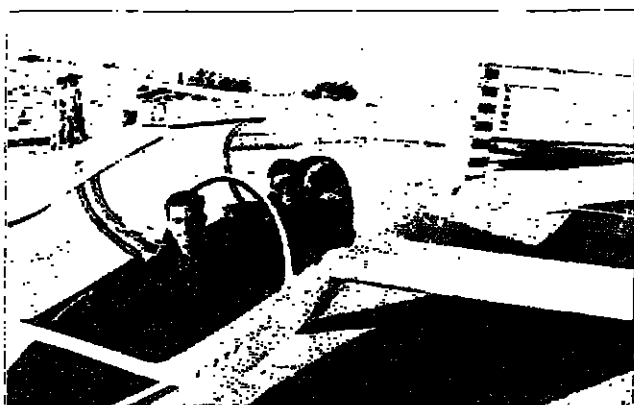
Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Expérience

Comme un oiseau...

Baptême de l'air sur un planeur à moteur : frissons assurés (quoique coûteux) dans le ciel d'Amman.



Avant de décoller, le moniteur-pilote doit demander les autorisations de vol.

Levier de guidage comme un joystick de console vidéo, pédales de direction, tableau d'affichage complet : les planeurs à moteur du Club royal jordanien ont tout de vrais avions. Dans la cabine de deux places, l'entraîneur et l'apprenti-aviateur du jour. Avant le décollage, le pilote obtient de la tour de contrôle toutes les autorisations et informations nécessaires au bon déroulement du vol. L'espace aérien est un peu comme un réseau routier dont il faut sans cesse surveiller la circulation pour éviter les accidents.

Mais avant de prendre les airs, le pilote propose à son passager-débutant de se familiariser avec l'engin. Sur la piste, celui-ci tente donc de guider le planeur. Ici, les pédales sont le volant de l'appareil et agissent sur sa queue permettant les changements de direction. Un zig à droite, un zag à gauche, pas évident de diriger la pression de ses pieds pour se diriger tout droit : petit aperçu des difficultés du pilotage rien que sur la terre ferme. Ensuite, le professeur-pilote reprend les choses en main pour le décollage. Le planeur est lancé à plus de 100 km/h pour un envol tout en douceur. C'est à peine si l'on aperçoit que l'on a quitté le plancher des dromadaires. Une fois que l'avion a atteint l'altitude autorisée, le pilote coupe le moteur et laisse son

engin aller en harmonie avec les mouvements de l'air. Les soucis quotidiens sont loin et l'on se sent pousser des ailes. Bien que novice, on nous permet de passer aux commandes. But du jeu : maîtriser l'équilibre de l'appareil. Frissons de « montagnes russes » garantis. A plusieurs reprises, on a envie de tout lâcher mais l'instructeur est là pour corriger et conseiller. Au fil des ronds dans l'air, on gagne un peu d'assurance. Comme un oiseau qui ne ressent plus que l'effacement du vent, l'avion n'est plus rien. On prend alors le temps d'observer le paysage. A plusieurs centaines de mètres d'altitude, Amman ne paraît plus aussi petite face au chaos de la périphérie semi-industrielle et polluée. Ici, on reconnaît le cube du mémorial des martyrs près de la Cité des Sports et là, le trapèze de la Housing Bank. Mais il est déjà temps de rentrer. Le pilote rallume le moteur, demande l'autorisation d'atterrir et se concentre pour cette manœuvre toujours délicate. Très vite c'est le retour sur la terre ferme. Le ciel redevient l'espace des rêves les plus fous. On a envie de repartir...

Shadi Abdallah

Club royal jordanien de planeurs, Aéroport de Marka, Tél. : 891401-ext. 253. Le club propose plusieurs types de vols dont celui avec un planeur à moteur (65 JDH).

Tyché, la déesse bonne fortune des villes orientales par Véronique Abu-Najm

Dans tout l'Orient ancien, Tyché, déesse de la fortune et image de la cité, est si familière qu'elle figure à la tête de nombreuses villes, telles entre autres Jérash, Amman, Madaba, Pétra. Inconnue des poèmes homériques, Tyché n'est pas une déesse du panthéon grec mais la notion de Hasard divinisé. Bien qu'à l'origine, ce terme désigne l'accident positif ou négatif dicté par le sort, la notion de bonne fortune finit par l'emporter. Sa personnification prend une importance croissante à l'époque hellénistique et romaine. Étant une abstraction, Tyché ne possède pas de mythe, particularité qui la dote d'une étonnante plasticité ouverte au syncrétisme : tantôt elle est absorbée par les divinités locales, tantôt se pose en parèdre, tantôt s'assimile en prêtant à la divinité indigène l'un de ses attributs. Sous l'effet de l'hellénisation se répandent les schémas de représentation : la déesse est soit debout en majesté, soit assise sur un trône et les attributs courants de cette divinité : le gouvernail, le sceptre, la corne d'abondance, le dieu-fleuve représenté par un nageur, le

rocher et surtout la couronne tourterle. Cette coiffe, peut-être d'origine hittite, était portée par les rois assyriens et achéménides. Symbole de protection, de victoire et de fécondité, elle devient au cours du 1er siècle av. J.-C. la caractéristique de la cité divinisée et confère à la divinité qui la porte le statut de déesse tutélaire. C'est donc à ce titre que nous trouvons Tyché à la tête des principales villes orientales. En elle se confondent le caractère topique (protection d'un lieu) et la fonction tutélaire, la cité étant entendue à la fois comme lieu géographique et corps politique. Sans compter des particularités empruntées à des divinités indigènes.

En plein empire chrétien, la mosaïque du Hall d'Hippolyte (VIème siècle ap. J.-C.) à Madaba réunit plusieurs avatars de Tyché : outre la déesse siégeant en madrone aujourd'hui encore emblème de la ville, nous trouvons dans les angles du pavement les Tychés-Saisons (voir ci-contre), lointain génie de ce génie de l'abondance.



Nouvelles du Lays

Mémoire

Papon : le dernier procès de Vichy

Pendant six mois, le procès de Maurice Papon, haut fonctionnaire sous le régime de Vichy, a occupé l'actualité française. La cour d'assises de Gironde l'a finalement condamné à dix ans de prison pour complicité de crimes contre l'humanité. Retour sur un homme qui a (trop) fait parler de lui.

Une Histoire blanche

Anamnèse. Un mot d'origine grecque qui signifie commémoration ou plus précisément rétablissement de la mémoire. Dans le champ médical, ce terme désigne les renseignements obtenus par le médecin après interrogation du malade et de son entourage. Que se passe-t-il lorsqu'à la façon du docteur, on interroge la jeune Histoire de la Jordanie, quels sont les souvenirs et les périodes qui reviennent en mémoire ?

En réalité, personne n'a oublié la Grande Révolte Arabe, cette aventure conquérante contre le joug ottoman menée par les fils du Chérif Hussein de la Mecque et par un jeune officier britannique, héros exalté connu sous le nom de Lawrence d'Arabie. Les lendemains de la Première Guerre Mondiale seront moins chantants puisqu'à défaut d'un grand État arabe indépendant pourtant promis par Londres, les deux frères Fayçal et Abdallah récupéreront respectivement le royaume d'Irak et l'émirat de Ma'an-Kérak, nouveau territoire au nord de la Mecque. Le 20 mars 1921, un dimanche après-midi, Winston Churchill, alors secrétaire aux Colonies, inscrit un nouveau pays sur la carte du Proche-Orient. La naissance est quelque peu circonstancielle mais elle est heureuse malgré tout.

Personne n'a oublié non plus le 25 mai 1946, le jour où l'assemblée constituante, proclamant l'avènement du « royaume hachémite de Jordanie », mit fin à la domination coloniale. De même, le couronnement de Hussein bin-Talal, le 11 août 1952 et son accession au trône l'année suivante, sont encore dans tous les esprits. Hussein, roi de Jordanie, incarnation exacte de son pays.

Ces événements sont censés cimenter les fondements d'un royaume, qu'on ne pensait pas si durable à sa naissance. Autant de moments inévitables à marquer d'une pierre blanche.

Et les pierres noires alors ? L'Histoire de la Jordanie en compte-t-elle ? Certainement, comme n'importe quel autre pays. Connues de l'étranger, elles représentent encore un tabou ici, un de ces secrets de famille que l'on veut enfouir au plus profond de sa mémoire. Il en est une particulièrement qui a déchiré le royaume et dont la seule évocation jette le silence et la circonspection. Vingt-huit plus tard, il y a toujours des questions à ne pas poser, des sujets à ne pas traiter dans un journal publié en Jordanie. Pourquoi ? L'idée même de cette question peut être aujourd'hui considérée comme un délit. La mémoire n'aime pas être rappelée à l'ordre.

Il faut donc mieux se taire en espérant qu'un jour, sans aucun doute douloureux, les uns et les autres auront le courage et la dignité d'affronter leur passé commun. Ce jour-là n'est pas encore venu. Les Jordaniens préfèrent encore les histoires blanches.

Le Jourdain

Le visage émacié.

L'homme s'est levé, une liasse de papiers à la main. Ses premiers mots sont pour sa femme, Paulette, décédée dans la semaine : « Ce procès, où la disparition était présente avec moi dans ce box, et tout de qui l'a précédé l'ont assassiné à petit feu ». Sa voix le trahit mais très rapidement il retrouve son calme et sa morgue pour faire face à ses adversaires. Un Maurice Papon, dans sa déclaration finale lors de la dernière audience comme dans les 93 précédentes : pugnace, sarcastique, orgueilleux.

Jusqu'au bout l'accusé Papon, 87 ans, a voulu rester le maître de ce procès d'assises interminable, le plus long de l'après-guerre : « C'est tout ou rien, a-t-il lancé aux jurés, je suis coupable ou innocent ». Ceux-ci en ont décidé autrement en refusant aussi bien l'acquiescement que la perpétuité. Entre ces deux extrêmes, ils ont choisi une peine de principe. L'ancien secrétaire général de la préfecture de Bordeaux pendant la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale est bien coupable de complicité de crimes contre l'humanité mais ce n'est ni le militaire Paul Touvier et encore moins le tortionnaire nazi Klaus Barbie. Non, Maurice Papon n'a été tout au plus qu'un simple fonctionnaire.

Pas le plus grand, pas le plus petit non plus mais le rouage efficace et actif d'une administration qui a permis en collaboration avec les Allemands, l'envoi vers les camps de la mort de milliers de juifs français et étrangers. Connaissail-il la solution finale ? Son avocat a martelé que non. Implicitement, la cour l'a reconnu aussi en concluant qu'il n'était pas responsable de l'assassinat des déportés. Mais elle l'a par ailleurs déclaré coupable des arrestations et séquestrations commises en



Maurice Papon avec ses gardes du corps.

juillet, août et octobre 1942 et janvier 1944.

Méthodique

Entre servir l'État ou démissionner, l'homme des cabinets a choisi d'assumer toutes ses fonctions. Les services nés de la guerre - transports, ravitaillement - étaient bien placés sous son autorité. Tout comme d'ailleurs, le service des Questions juives, cette direction chargée de tenir à jour le fichier des juifs français et étrangers, qui se révélait un redoutable instrument lorsque les Allemands exigeaient des listes des personnes fichées dans les camps.

Rentré derrière sa prose administrative polissée et ses bordereaux, Maurice Papon est apparu aussi comme l'un de ces grands commis de l'État, amoureux du travail bien fait mais indifférent au malheur des autres : profil buté, résistance ap-

parente aux remords, froideur face aux victimes. Homme austère et droit, il posait chaque matin dans son box sur une tablette en bois, son étui à lunettes, son agenda, un dossier. Méthodique, comme s'il était assis à son bureau de la Préfecture de Gironde ou plutôt à celui de la Préfecture de police de Paris. Car Papon, c'est aussi cela, une carrière soignée vers le sommet. À la fin de la guerre, il s'assure une habile reconversion vers les milieux de la Résistance et à la Libération, se retrouve au Ministère de l'Intérieur. Puis sa carrière traverse les remous de la décolonisation. Secrétaire général du protectorat du Maroc, préfet de Constantine, il est nommé en 1958 préfet de police de Paris, chargé de maintenir l'ordre en pleine guerre d'Algérie. Papon accomplira sa mission avec zèle.

Jusqu'en 1981, où son trouble passé est révélé dans la presse, il continue ainsi de grappiller les échelons et devient ministre du Budget en 78.

Après dix-sept ans de procédures, le procès de l'ancien secrétaire général de la préfecture de Bordeaux s'ouvre enfin en octobre 1997. Plus de 50 ans après les faits (le crime contre l'humanité est imprescriptible), Papon aujourd'hui condamné, ce procès aura-t-il été utile ? Les avis sont partagés. Ultra-médiatisé, il a beaucoup agacé les Français. Reste qu'il a souligné qu'un jour se diront les difficultés de la France à assumer son passé. Dernier grand procès d'un régime honteux, il permet ainsi de tourner l'une des pages les plus noires de l'Histoire de France.

Le Jourdain

Social

S.O.S. orphelinat abandonné

La Jordanie ne prend en charge que la moitié de ses 80.000 orphelins.

Or, les structures d'accueil existantes n'ont pas toujours les moyens suffisants pour élever les enfants dans de bonnes conditions. C'est le cas de l'orphelinat de Wadi Sir.

Dans cette bâtisse de deux étages, tout est fait pour rendre l'existence des 70 filles et 30 garçons plus agréable. Mais les orphelins de l'Association de Wadi Sir ne peuvent guère envisager leur avenir avec enthousiasme, face aux difficultés matérielles qui s'accumulent. Premièrement, le transport. Un seul bus est disponible pour déposer les enfants à l'école. « Imaginez que nous avons une centaine d'enfants à conduire chaque jour à l'école », raconte la directrice de l'association, Nabila Hamdan, le chauffeur doit donc effectuer plusieurs allers-retours. Aussi attendent-ils le jeudi, jour de congé des enfants, pour aller faire toutes les courses de la semaine. Deuxièmement, les vêtements. L'orphelinat reçoit bien

quelques ballots de pantalons, de pulls et de chaussures. Mais ce n'est jamais suffisant. Très justement, Nabila fait remarquer que « les enfants grandissent rapidement » et que souvent « ils doivent se changer chaque jour ». En raison de cette pénurie, les enfants se partagent les vêtements et il n'est pas rare de les voir trainer dans les couloirs de l'établissement avec des chemises trop grandes ou des pantalons trop courts.

Hôpital éloigné

Bien entendu, c'est le manque d'argent qui est en cause. L'association survit depuis 1978 essentiellement avec les dons privés et les aides publiques. Ces dernières se limitent à une somme de 11.000 dinars par an distribuée par le Ministère du Développement So-

cial, alors que l'orphelinat dépense chaque mois 3000 dinars pour offrir le strict nécessaire aux enfants (eau, électricité, chauffage, nourriture...). L'association reçoit aussi une aide sanitaire du Ministère sous forme de remboursements médicaux, à condition de faire

soigner les orphelins dans un hôpital public de Djebel Al-Ahrafite, à l'autre bout de la ville. « C'est très loin », se plaint la directrice, quand un enfant tombe malade en pleine nuit et que je n'ai pas de transport à disposition, je suis obligée de faire appel à la police... »

Quant aux donations privées, elles restent limitées et permettent à peine à l'association de s'en sortir. À cet égard, Nabila Hamdan observe que « les gens se souviennent de la pauvreté des autres seulement pendant le ramadan ». Le reste de l'année, les ressources sont minimes.

Ce manque de moyens est d'autant plus difficile à gérer que le nombre d'enfants dans l'établissement varie de jour en jour. Parfois, les orphelins y sont placés seulement pour quelques semaines et du jour au lendemain, l'orphelinat peut accueillir vingt-trois nouvelles. Au bout du compte, l'éducation en pâtit. C'est le cas d'une jeune hachémite qui faute d'argent n'a pu être inscrite à l'université. Elle s'est rabattue finalement sur des études en Collège moins onéreuses.

Par ailleurs, l'administration de l'orphelinat a pensé ouvrir une section technique pour permettre aux plus âgés de commencer à apprendre un métier (électricité, charpenterie, couture...). Une manière pour les jeunes de gagner leur indépendance et de se sentir un peu plus utiles. Mais ce projet qui coûte 30.000 dinars demeure un rêve inaccessible.

La directrice de l'orphelinat veut compter sur la générosité des gens. Lors du dernier ramadan, la princesse Basma, présidente d'honneur de l'association, leur avait rendu visite pour leur remettre des cadeaux et des vêtements. Elle n'était pas venue depuis deux ans.

Texte et photo : Amineh Ishtay



Malgré les donations du ramadan, l'orphelinat manque de vêtements. Et les tailles ne conviennent pas toujours aux enfants.

Sports

Un ovale au royaume des ronds

Pendant les vacances de l'Aïd, la Jordanie a organisé son premier tournoi de rugby. Un sport inattendu sous cette latitude.

Implanter le rugby en royaume hachémite relevait de la mission impossible. C'était un peu comme essayer de faire pousser un géranium dans le désert du Wadi Rum. Pourtant, presque dix ans après les premiers pas, on peut dire que le rugby a pris racine dans cette terre vouée au dieu football où encore au basket. Les débuts datent de 1989 mais le club embryonnaire a dû rapidement cesser ses activités en raison de la Guerre du Golfe. Les expatriés sont obligés de quitter le pays et emportent le ballon ovale dans leurs bagages. Martin Cronin, deuxième conseiller de l'Ambassade britannique, le ramène avec lui en 1994. Il passe une petite annonce dans le journal et une dizaine d'« aficionados » répondent présents. Les premiers entraînements se déroulent sur les courts de tennis bétonnés de l'Hôtel Marriott.

Difficile d'apprendre à plaquer dans ces conditions. Le club se met alors en quête d'une autre aire de jeu. Ce sera d'abord un rectangle d'herbe grasse à l'intérieur du campus de l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne. Puis vient s'ajouter début 1997 un terrain de sable dans la Cité des Sports d'Amman. Ce « pitch », comme disent les Britanniques, est un ancien terrain de polo, mis gracieusement à la disposition du jeune club de rugby par le Prince Hassan.

Quelques aménagements sont toutefois nécessaires : les dunes sont aplanies, les cailloux retirés à un mètre, les lignes tracées et les poteaux d'enduit élevés. Ne manquent plus que les vestiaires et les douches. Mais les rugbymen ne sont pas gens difficiles et apprécient sans compter leur nouveau domaine où ils peuvent pratiquer

leur art pour de vrai. Très vite, les troupes grossissent durant les séances d'entraînement. Il n'est pas rare de voir se pointer plus d'une vingtaine de ces gabarits porte-manteaux typiques d'un club d'élite pour « de gentilles ». Les expatriés sont toujours très nombreux : mais les Jordaniens ne laissent pas leur part au chien et l'entraîneur Mike Sedman, attaché militaire à l'Ambassade britannique, se réjouit de leur fidélité. Lors du tournoi, les deux équipes locales étaient ainsi composées à

moitié de Jordaniens. La première à terminer bonne dernière avec une cuillère en bois pour toute récompense, comme le veut la tradition rugbyistique. En revanche, la seconde est parvenue à se hisser en finale du tournoi, ne s'inclinant que 12-6 face au Caire.

Une performance que regardent encore d'un oeil goguenard les gamins, qui viennent jouer au foot autour du « pitch ». Peut-être qu'un jour se diront-ils que cet ovale vaut bien un rond ?

Yannick Laine

Rhodia, un nouveau nom, une nouvelle marque, une nouvelle aventure industrielle

Sous le haut patronage du Ministère de l'Environnement, M. Akram Chéhab, une conférence de presse a eu lieu le vendredi 3 avril à l'hôtel Bristol de Beyrouth pour annoncer la naissance d'un nouveau leader de chimies de spécialités Rhodia appartenant au groupe mondial Rhône-Poulenc et « Le Prix Rhodia pour la Protection de l'Environnement ».

Dans son discours d'ouverture, Monsieur Antoine Sacy Directeur Régional de Rhodia, a précisé que le prix sera décerné aux journalistes de la presse écrite et audiovisuelle, le 5 juin 1999, à l'occasion de la journée mondiale de l'environnement. Le montant de chaque prix est de 2000 usd. Ce prix récompense les journalistes pour leur incitation à l'avenir les journalistes des autres pays du Moyen-Orient.

Intervenant ensuite, Monsieur Jean-Benoît Trouillet, Président Directeur Général de Rhodia a expliqué que cette nouvelle société est opérationnelle depuis le 1er janvier 1998 par la fusion des deux secteurs « Chimie » et « Fibres & Polymères » appartenant au Groupe mondial Rhône-Poulenc. Il a signalé que depuis 1997, Rhodia a réalisé un chiffre d'affaires de 2,6 milliards de dollars avec 25 000 employés dans le monde. Rhodia est aujourd'hui un leader dans les chimies de spécialités. La société est membre du conseil mondial.

Monsieur Trouillet a ensuite présenté les différentes divisions qui composent Rhodia : organique fine, spécialités pour produits de consommation, spécialités pour produits industriels, polymères, services et spécialités et polyester.

Un cocktail a suivi la conférence regroupant des personnalités libanaises, hommes d'affaires et représentants commerciaux du Moyen-Orient et en présence également du Directeur Commercial de Rhodia Jordanie Madame Alla Garin Hussein.

C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré au réalisateur Luis Buñuel. *Le fantôme de la liberté*, film de 1974 en couleur, sous-titré en arabe avec Michel Piccoli. Inventaire de personnages et de situations dans le style surréaliste. Lundi 20 avril à 18h30 et 20h30 au Centre culturel français. Renseignements au 4636445 ou 4637009.

Exposition

Périple de la Mer Morte, 1938-1949. Photographies noir et blanc des frères Jassens et Savignac de l'École biblique et archéologique (française) de Jérusalem : « Une croisière, un périple de la mer de sel, sur la lue Asphalite aux eaux sombres et lourdes comme un couvercle sur les tristes secrets des côtes maudites » (Renaud Escande). Jusqu'au 30 avril au CCF.

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THE STAR'S

WORKING

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

What the Compaq-Digital merger could mean to the international computer industry:

The second largest IT company in the world

COMPAQ ACQUISITION of Digital is, by far, the largest takeover in the computer industry's history.

It has created a Goliath, which ranks as second in the information technology industry, second only to IBM.

The buyout involved a massive \$4.8 billion in cash, in addition to paying the rest in stock ownership in Compaq. What prompted the mega-deal? Compaq needed to break into the corporate computer market, and to do so with the force and strength, typical of Compaq's supremacy in PC markets.

Compaq wants to combine its low-cost production facilities and market penetration tactics with Digital's highly skilled service and support staff.

The result will be a major competitive force in corporate markets. Such competition should really worry the likes of IBM, Hewlett-Packard and similarly sized companies' upper-level market segments.

The deal was a means for Compaq to break away from only serving the PC industry. Compaq needed an entry ticket into the 'bigger game,' which it has been denied so far due to tough entrance barriers, most of which are technical and experience related.

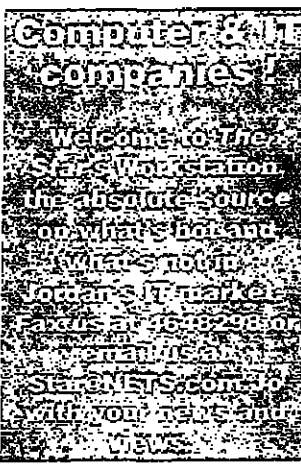
Starting with its acquisition of Tandem, the famous producer of Fault Tolerant systems, Compaq put its foot in



the corporate market door, and now it will take its activities to the next level.

The deal has many implications for companies like Sun, who can see more reliance on Windows NT emerging as a result, so it will have to redouble its efforts with UNIX-only customers.

It is the marvelous blend of Compaq hardware, Intel processors and Microsoft software which will drive the change in



V.90 heralds 56k modem standard: End of incompatible standards in sight

THE INTERNATIONAL Telecommunications Union (ITU) has determined a standard for 56K modems and given it an official number.

V.90—the standard—will allow previously incompatible x2 and k56flex modems to communicate with each other. The standard needs to be officially ratified by the ITU by September. This should basically be a rubber stamp operation.

However as modem manufacturers have agreed, you should be able to upgrade your modem to V.90 by the time you read this, as long as your device is flash upgradeable.

It is simply a matter of downloading code from the modem maker's website or bulletin board. Modem suppliers have been energetically involved in inter-operability testing to ensure that each brand of V.90 modem can

operate seamlessly with all other V.90 devices. 3com and Rockwell have already established inter-operability, which indicates that both company's products are compliant with the V.90 standard. 3com has linked up with other companies to carry out trials, and has extended an invitation on its Website for other firms to join in the testing.

Hayes Ascend and Cisco have also formed a working group to establish inter-operability between different brands. ■

3Com

Intel's 333MHz heads toward desktop

INTEL'S FASTEST, latest Pentium II microprocessor should be making it soon into computer systems.

The Intel Pentium II 333 MHz is aimed at large customers for now, but will find its way to smaller users and possibly home users within the year. Of course, it will be a while before it's mainstreamed, especially as it would have to

undergo a large price decrease. Currently, it would be fair to say that the entry level still hovers around the Pentium 233 - 266 MHz systems.

The new processor will offer the power required to unleash the many new graphics-intensive technologies such as digital video (known as DVD) and complex 3D software. Intel believes that people will

buy into this kind of power for their homes, so it is targeting the processor at major PC vendors who supply single and home users.

Gateway has already announced plans to incorporate the 333MHz processor in two of its upcoming multimedia PCs, and companies like AST, Acer and Hewlett-Packard will follow suit. ■

News update

Become an Internet SuperUser

● NETS is holding a workshop on 'How to become an Internet Super User.' This practical workshop is aimed at the smart business user, who wants to make the most out of his/her Internet connection and thus save valuable time and money.

As a result of the workshop, participants will have learned how to navigate the World Wide Web, maximize the use of their browser, enhance their Internet search capabilities and acquire valuable knowledge on

creating their own site on the web.

The workshop will take place on Saturday, April 25 at the Radisson SAS Hotel. For further information, contact NETS at telephone 5510101.

customers, and providing an opportunity for software users who do not enjoy technical support, to explore the benefits of using legally purchased software.

Microsoft establishes ADCU in region

● Microsoft Middle East has opened an application development customer unit, that aims to help the region's vertical application developers and generate interest in Microsoft platforms through technical briefings and updates, as well as providing advice on the development of local marketing programs.

The idea is to build up partnerships with more and more developers. Microsoft's stated aim is to partner with a massive 13,000 Microsoft certified Solution providers and ISVs worldwide. For more information, contact Abdel Aziz Ben Malek, at Microsoft Middle East (971 4) 527444.

Explorer 4.0 for Macintosh

FOLLOWING ITS agreement with Apple Computer, to continue to support the Macintosh platform, Microsoft has announced Internet Explorer 4.0, which aims to provide a complete, client-side, Internet solution for Mac users. By using Active Channels, this new version of Explorer allows users to deliver updates directly to their favorite sites without having to visit them. On another note, Microsoft is currently finalizing Office 98 for Macintosh. ■

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Young Mongolian riders kick up dust of ancient times

By Scott Martelle

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia—You have to rise early to beat the horses. Very early. We're already up and out by 5:30 am, walking in the predawn haze through a tent city at the base of a sweeping mountain-side. The camp is stirring, and soft voices and the gentle whinny of horses float among the tents. In the distance, beyond the low smoke of cook-fires and the tethered horses, we can see a small grandstand, and, facing the grandstand from 50 feet away, a short wooden observation tower.

This is where the day will really begin when, in about an hour, about 400 horses and their young riders move from the camp to the tower, then on to a nearby ridge. Then, when all the horses have gathered, they will trot en masse 15 miles out from the city, turn around and, at the sound of a gunshot, sprint back to this little wooden tower.

That cold recitation does little to brace us for how all this actually transpires.

This is Naadam, the ancient Mongolian festival codified into a national holiday after Mongolia's successful fight in 1921, with the help of the Russian Red Army, for independence from China. Held every July 9-11, the festival centers on the traditional Mongolian sports of wrestling, archery and horse riding.

But it is the spectacle of children racing horses that has brought us to this camp at the crack of dawn, for the first of three

days of such races.

A Los Angeles Times photographer and I were in Mongolia to cover a group of Los Angeles-based physicians who traveled here to help Mongolian doctors improve medical care. The doctors' visit coincided with Naadam, so the photographer, Gail Fisher, and I decided to take in the festivities with them.

We began with a few days in a tourist camp of "gers"—portable felt-and-canvas huts known to most of us by the Russian name, "yurts"—before moving on to Ulan Bator and the Naadam festival, with other side trips planned during the two-week visit. Most travelers come to Mongolia with tour groups. But it's also possible to make independent travel plans.

Given the decades of Soviet domination of Mongolia, English is not widely spoken, so hiring a driver and interpreter makes a huge difference in both freedom and comprehension. We lucked out by getting a fellow named Sodhi, a hydrologist with passable English skills and a pleasing sense of humor who seemed to know everyone in the country.

As significant as Naadam is for Mongolians, its informality is refreshing. Tickets (\$25 a day for foreigners) are required for the opening and closing ceremonies, and to watch the wrestling. Those events take place in the National Stadium, which is surrounded for the three days by vendors hawking everything from soft drinks to maps. No tickets are required for the arch-

ery competition—with both men's and women's divisions—which is held just outside the stadium.

The horse races take place at the city's edge and involve both girls and boys. You can buy grandstand tickets, but you really don't need to because the best views are from ground level.

We cross the dusty grasslands from the camp and step beneath the wooden observation tower, which will later serve as the finish line.

Then the swirl begins.

For more than an hour the horses enter the grounds, singly and in groups, circling the observation stand as the riders—children between 4 and 11 years old—chant the traditional song "Gaiin Goo" for luck and inspiration before riding off to a staging area atop a nearby ridge. It is pure bedlam, a carnival of billowing dust and snorting horses and the light, excited voices of youth.

The children must be strong enough to race 15 miles, and light enough to ride quickly. Most of the riders are in saddles—a Mongolian type that keeps the rider leaning forward—but many ride bareback. All are dressed in traditional robes of deep red or vibrant yellow or mixtures somewhere in between. Few ride alone. Fathers and brothers and uncles trot alongside, slowly swelling the group at the staging area to more than 2,000 horses.

From a distance, it looks like the return of Genghis Khan's thundering hordes.

Tourism exists as a nascent capitalist dream here, with rudimentary accommodations and the occasional upscale hotel in the capital, Ulan Bator, and little available elsewhere. A former Soviet satellite (Mongolia was the second nation, in 1921, to undergo a Communist revolution, opening the door to Soviet domination just after Mongolians won independence from China), Mongolia has only welcomed tourists for about the last five years, and the nation's lack of creature comforts only adds to the mystique.

Our group's visit was limited to the regions just outside Ulan Bator, though smaller Naadam festivals are held outside the capital in the "provinces," or regional centers. Ulan Bator is the easiest way into the country, but easy is a relative term. International flights connect from Beijing, Moscow or Osaka. Japan. We flew from Beijing.

For our first few nights of our visit we stayed at the Undur Dov ger camp 40 miles from Ulan Bator. Out here, the city gives way quickly to vast sweeps of emptiness, wide valleys defined by sloping brown hills covered with a light green fuzz of grass and occasional stands of larch and birch trees.

Such views suck you into the middle of them. Or to the top. Gail and I and four others from the doctors group climbed the deceptively low hill behind the camp and were rewarded with stunning views of steppes and sloping hills stretching as far as the eye can see, dotted with gers (real ones, not tourist huts) and crisscrossed with dirt pathways traversed by horses and Russian four-wheel-drive vehicles, the country's two main modes of transportation.

After two days in the countryside, we shifted our base to Ulan Bator's twin-towered Bayangol Hotel, easing life a bit. The hotel has three restaurants, one on the main floor that was marked by slow service and uninspired food. But the two small restaurants in the towers were much better: quicker service, more reliable quality and an inti-



A father trains his son for Mongolia's Naadam festival race. Photo by Gail Fisher.

mate European atmosphere.

There are other equally satisfying spots around town. The White House Hotel has a restaurant on the first floor and an English pub-style jazz club and bar upstairs. The Capital, owned by a woman from Cameroon, serves a mix of African and Continental dishes.

We spent one day sightseeing in the capital. The National Museum of Fine Arts was limited but pleasant, with some nice examples of Mongolian paintings and sculpture going back several centuries. The Gandan Buddhist monastery and the Bogd Khan Palace, home of the last khan, were subtly intriguing, enhanced, oddly enough, by their down-at-the-heels condition.

It was horses that formed the trip's most memorable moments. In many cultures, traditions are sustained as relics, marketed examples of the way things once were. There's a touch of that in the horse races of Naadam too. But in a land where half the country still leads semi-nomadic lives—following herds of sheep, goats, cattle and yaks—a cross-country race represents skills still nurtured for use, not for nostalgia.

It is a harsh race. From the start there is jostling and flailing of whips, snorting and occasional falls. During the week—over 100 degrees in mid-afternoon—and scores of young riders suffered injuries, though it was not clear that any were serious.

The view from the finish line is intense. In the distance a thin cloud of dust appears on the horizon, then grows as the pack moves closer, hooves pounding the turf with a distant rumble. The pace car—a Russian vehicle—bounces over the ridge first, careening wildly, quickly followed by the horses, spread out at intervals of several yards.

As the lead horses near the finish line, the growing thunder of hooves merges with the cheers of the crowd, several thousand strong now. The winning rider, who looks to be about 8 years old, flashes across the line standing high in his stirrups, right hand triumphantly pumping above his head before he is swallowed by the crowd arrayed in a semicircle beyond the finish line.

It is a magical, and timeless, moment. ■

LA Times-Washington Post

Horseback riders race during Naadam, an ancient Mongolian festival which is now a national holiday celebrating the country's independence from China. Photo by Gail Fisher.

